

TDS 4402

# African Bird Club



Bulletin of the African Bird Club

Vol 15 No 1 March 2008

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Singing habits of forest  
honeyguides in the  
Guineo-Congolian  
region

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New bird records and  
rarities in Botswana

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Taita Falcon survey in  
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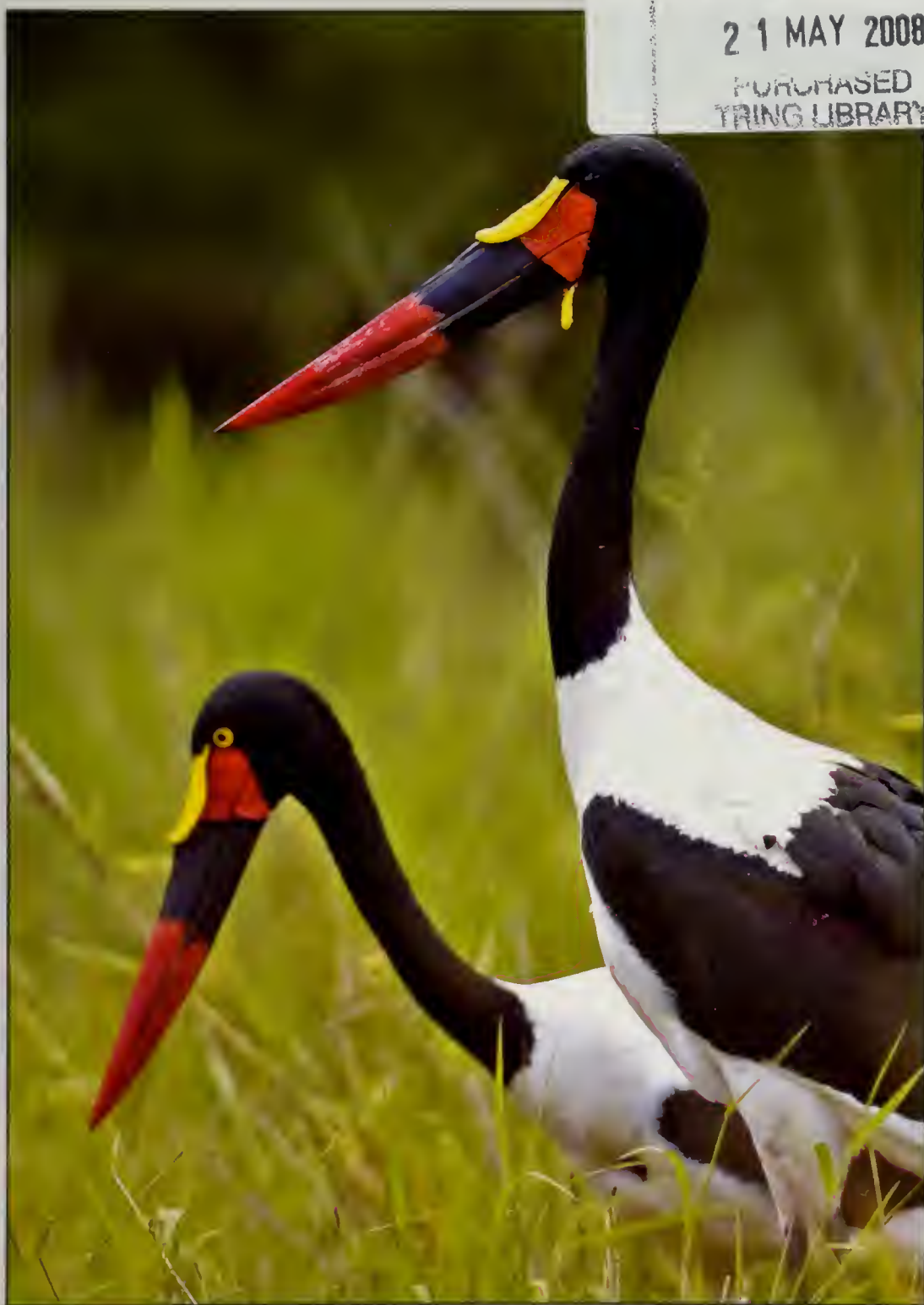
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Western Reef Heron  
breeding in Tunisia

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# African Bird Club

## The African Bird Club aims to:

- provide a worldwide focus for African ornithology
- encourage an interest in the conservation of the birds of the region
- liaise with and promote the work of existing regional societies
- publish a twice-yearly colour bulletin
- encourage observers to visit lesser known areas of the region
- encourage observers to actively search for globally threatened and near-threatened species
- run the ABC Conservation Programme

Registered Charity No 1053920

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## ABC Membership

Membership is open to all. Annual subscription rates are:

Individual	Europe & Africa: UK£18	Rest of the World: UK£20
Family	Europe & Africa: UK£21	Rest of the World: UK£23
Student	Europe & Africa: UK£10	Rest of the World: UK£12
Supporting	UK£30 minimum	
Life	UK£350	

To join or for further details please visit the ABC web site (where there are secure online payment facilities) or write to the Membership Secretary—see contact information below.

## ABC Website

<http://www.africanbirdclub.org>

## Photographers and artists

ABC is always looking for drawings and photos to publish in the Bulletin. If you are interested in contributing, please contact the Graphics Editor, Pete Leonard, [pleonard@care4free.net](mailto:pleonard@care4free.net)

## Contact ABC

African Bird Club, c/o BirdLife International, Wellbrook Court, Girton Road, Cambridge CB3 0NA. E-mail:

• [info@africanbirdclub.org](mailto:info@africanbirdclub.org) • website: <http://www.africanbirdclub.org>

Further information can be obtained directly from individual Council members by writing to them at the Club's postal address, or by e-mail as follows:

Chairman *Richard Webb* • [chairman@africanbirdclub.org](mailto:chairman@africanbirdclub.org)

Secretary *Geoff Randall* • [secretary@africanbirdclub.org](mailto:secretary@africanbirdclub.org)

Treasurer *John Caddick* • [treasurer@africanbirdclub.org](mailto:treasurer@africanbirdclub.org)

Bulletin Editor *Guy Kirwan* • [editor@africanbirdclub.org](mailto:editor@africanbirdclub.org)

Conservation Officer *Steph Tyler* • [conservation@africanbirdclub.org](mailto:conservation@africanbirdclub.org)

Information Officer *Keith Betton* • [info@africanbirdclub.org](mailto:info@africanbirdclub.org)

Membership Secretary *Alan Williams*

• [membership@africanbirdclub.org](mailto:membership@africanbirdclub.org)

Sales Officer *Bev Randall* • [sales@africanbirdclub.org](mailto:sales@africanbirdclub.org)

Rutland Officer *Neil Thomas* • [rutland@africanbirdclub.org](mailto:rutland@africanbirdclub.org)

Representatives Coordinator • [reps@africanbirdclub.org](mailto:reps@africanbirdclub.org)

Corporate Sponsors Officer *Elaine Cook*

• [corporatesponsors@africanbirdclub.org](mailto:corporatesponsors@africanbirdclub.org)

## The Bulletin of the African Bird Club

The Bulletin of the ABC provides a forum for news, letters, notices, recent publications, expedition results, reviews and interim publication of studies on African birds by contributors from throughout the world. Publication of results in the Bulletin of the ABC does not preclude publication of final results as journal papers either by the ABC or elsewhere. No

material should, however, be submitted simultaneously to the *Bulletin of the ABC* and to any other publication.

Brief notes for contributors appear elsewhere in this Bulletin and further details are available from the Editor ([editor@africanbirdclub.org](mailto:editor@africanbirdclub.org)).



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HISTORY MUSEUM

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# Club News



## ABC at the 2007 British Birdwatching Fair

The British Birdwatching Fair is the premier event for those interested in birds, and ABC has attended for the last 14 years. The 2007 fair was as successful as an outdoor event can be, given the vagaries of a British summer, which can be remarkably wet. This proved to be the case on two of the three days. Nevertheless, attendance held up and the Club had a successful three days.

Like many small charities, the Club is run by volunteers who offer their time to man the stand. Council members are prominent, but are supported by a willing band of helpers. The commitment does not end with the three days of the fair, as stock has to be made available, bulletins put in envelopes, and everything has to be assembled according to plan.

There are many reasons for the Club's presence at the fair. Prospective members can join; existing members can collect their copies of the current Bulletin; and those new to birding in Africa can meet those with first-hand knowledge of the continent. People meet and reminisce about past trips, discuss future

ones or just discuss the state of affairs in one country or another.

Our corporate sponsors have their name and logo prominently displayed on the stand. Corporate sponsorship has grown recently (see 'Elaine Cook' below) and we welcome the opportunity to develop a relationship with companies interested in Africa. Many of our sponsors are present at the Fair too.

## Credit card payments

Many members pay their subscriptions, donations and for sales items using a credit card, either via the website or by mail order. Since early 2006, we have used an electronic payment facility for processing transactions which has proved reliable and efficient. It is also cheaper for the Club to process transactions this way as bank charges are less than for paper transactions. In order to use electronic processing, we require you to send your Customer Verification Code (CVC) with your other credit card details. Your CVC code comprises the final three digits in the signature strip on the back of your card. The website and our literature have been modified to reflect the

change, which will improve transaction security and reduce costs.

*Contributed by John Caddick*

## ABC Website

The ABC website ([www.africanbirdclub.org](http://www.africanbirdclub.org)) continues to be a popular resource and one of the leading sites for information about birds in Africa. It receives over 15,000 unique visitors each month, c.40% of whom are based in North America and 15% in the UK. There are also many visits from other European countries, Australia, Asia and South America. Disappointing is the low volume to date from African countries.

Downloadable country checklists were launched in March 2007 and have proved very popular, with over 4,000 downloads to date, the most popular countries being South Africa, The Gambia, Morocco and Ethiopia. By the time of publication, we hope to have a checklist in place for every country. In addition, we continue to add multiple checklists for countries where appropriate and where published information is available. This can be especially relevant for islands, e.g. there are separate checklists for São Tomé and



Figures 1–2. ABC stand at the British Birdwatching Fair  
Le stand du ABC à la Foire ornithologique britannique



Príncipe. The database supporting the checklists now has over 100,000 entries; if you find any errors, please let the Club know.

The African Bird Image Database also continues to be a well-used resource. The database and number of registered photographers are still growing and, at the time of writing, there were 8,654 photos of 1,682 species contributed by 409 photographers. To improve the quality, we have implemented a gentle 'cull' of some of the older and poorer images. There are still many species found in Africa for which we lack images, so we would appreciate help to fill the gaps.

A further major development has been the introduction of a discussion forum on the website. We believe that this is the first internet forum dedicated to the birds of all Africa. Its objectives are: to provide the capability for interactive discussion on all aspects of birds in the region; to provide a facility to document recent sightings and share photos; to provide help with species identification, travel, etc; to incorporate sound, video and new technologies in the future; and to construct a database of information with comprehensive search capabilities.

An analysis of AfricanBirding e-mails determined the topic structure of the forum. We will continue to run AfricanBirding in parallel with the forum and post its e-mails to the forum. That way, useful information will be stored in the database and thus be available subsequently. We expected that the additional capabilities of the forum would mean that the majority of AfricanBirding users would post to the forum directly. However, the e-mail system has continued to be very popular. Whilst forum items have been viewed by users on a regular basis, there has been little discussion. For example, a photograph of a mystery booby *Sula* sp. has been viewed 444 times but no-one has yet posted a comment or a suggested identity.

We have a work plan of continuing developments and we welcome new contributions to the site, feed-

back on what has been achieved so far and ideas on how to improve the site's pages.

*Contributed by John Caddick*

### **Club membership**

The membership at the end of 2007 was stable at c.1,240. The Club has members in 70 countries with the UK (613) representing c.50% of total and the USA (74), Netherlands (50), South Africa (48), Germany (41), Seychelles (36), France (31) and Kenya (29) the other countries with the largest memberships; 23 countries have only a single member. On the inside back cover of each Bulletin is a list of ABC country representatives, together with a list of countries with no current representative. A volunteer has been received from the USA, but given that it is such a large country, there is a need to appoint up to three representatives. Further volunteers are welcome for the USA, as are volunteers for those countries without a representative.

### **Richard Webb**

Richard Webb is standing down as Chairman of ABC, a post he has held for three years, having also served as Secretary and Bulletin Editor during the Club's early years. Richard has helped steer the Club to its current position of a stable membership, healthy financial state and an increasingly attractive bulletin. He hopes the bulletin will become full colour in due course. The Conservation Fund has also grown in strength under Richard's stewardship. ABC wishes him every success in the future.

### **Elaine Cook**

Elaine retired from Council with effect from 2008, after four years service, but will continue as Corporate Sponsorship and Publicity Officer. The great work that Elaine is doing is ably demonstrated by the number of Corporate Sponsors, which has grown from seven in 2003 to 27 in 2007, generating an extra UK£2,000 p.a. for the Conservation Fund. Another memorable feature of

Elaine's tenure on Council was that she made her home available for meetings, including preparing superb lunches.

### **Julie Childs**

Julie has also decided to stand down from Council and her role as Country Representatives Coordinator. Council thanks Julie for her valuable contribution to the Club.

### **Proposed changes to Council**

Council has unanimously agreed to propose Keith Betton to succeed Richard Webb as Chairman, and Phil Atkinson to become Vice-Chairman. Phil, a past Chairman of ABC, has been co-opted as Vice-Chairman during the past year.

### **Request for Council members**

Council continues to be run by a small yet dedicated group, but, as is apparent from Keith Betton and Phil Atkinson's return, the same individuals continue to serve the Club. Some fresh 'blood' is very much required. We would welcome offers from members interested in joining Council, and ABC currently has specific vacancies for a Meetings Officer (to organise the AGM) and an Advertising Officer (to work alongside Elaine Cook in her capacity as Corporate Sponsorship and Publicity Officer).

*Contributed by Richard Webb*

### **Promoting the Club**

As British-based members may have seen, the magazine *Birdwatch* recently published an article to promote the Club. ABC thanks Dominic Mitchell for publishing the article, Mark Cocker for writing it on the Club's behalf and Nigel Blake for use of the photograph that accompanied it. We hope that the article will help promote the Club and increase membership. The magazine *Africa—Birds & Birding* will also be carrying an article about ABC authored by the Club's president, Martin Woodcock, in the near future. Finally, the Cape Bird Club has recently distributed a copy of the

Club's membership flier with their publication *Promerops*. We are grateful to *Africa—Birds & Birding* and the Cape Bird Club for their support, and trust that the Club's profile and membership will increase as a result, especially in southern Africa. We also thank Crowes for producing the fliers for the mailshot free of charge.

*Contributed by Richard Webb*

### Request for back numbers of the Bulletin

New members often purchase sets of back numbers of the Bulletin, but ABC's stocks of the older issues are now running very low, whilst some are completely out of stock. Consequently, new members sometimes receive photocopies of certain issues. If you have any unwanted copies, please consider donating them to the Club, to replenish stocks. Bulletins can be returned, either to the Club stand at the

Rutland Birdfair, or via the Club's BirdLife address.

### African Bird Club checklist

ABC website visitors will have noticed a recent update to the checklist of African birds. In January 2007 a major update was placed on the site, comprising a review of all scientific names, including some splits, as well as brief notes on status, habitat and range for all non-passerines. For the most recent update, status, habitat and range information has been extended to all passerines. It has also involved a review of preferred English names, especially in the light of the International Ornithological Congress list of English names and a new edition of Clements' checklist. Also a series of newly recorded, or previously missed (!), vagrants, especially North American species to the Azores, has been added. There is a list in the Introduction of changes that have been made to preferred

names, enabling users to update more easily.

This list does not represent a definitive taxonomic statement, either by the Club or myself. Decisions as to which taxa to consider as species and the name (or names) to use are pragmatic choices based largely on the most commonly used names in Africa, but with an emphasis on more recent publications. As users of the list will know, it is designed primarily so that readers can determine the form being considered, as it includes notes on different treatment in other major lists, which have been updated to include the most recent Clements checklist, that by BirdLife International and recent volumes of *Handbook of the Birds of the World*. Mistakes must remain and these, along with details of any new species for the list, can be sent to me via e-mail: [checklist@africanbirdclub.org](mailto:checklist@africanbirdclub.org).

*Contributed by Peter Lack*

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## Cape Bird Club's Diamond Year

2008 is the Cape Bird Club's 60th ('Diamond') anniversary. Still the largest bird club on the continent and the second oldest in South Africa, in celebration of this milestone, a year's calendar of events has been planned for members to share some birding experiences and camaraderie. There will be two birding trips, to Tanzania and Madagascar, and two birding camps closer to home, at the Dronfield Reserve, in the Kimberley area, and Red Stone Hills near Callitzdorp. Furthermore, a Birding Big Day Competition will be held in West Coast National Park, with sponsored prizes.

May being the actual anniversary month, an evening celebration will take place with champagne, 'finger' food, speeches, a raffle, a lucky draw and a special guest talk, 'Memories of a Birdman—looking back 60 years' by the Club's Hon. President,

Peter Steyn. In addition, with two half-day courses, an invited lunch for all past and present committee, as well as subcommittee contributors over the years, a BirdLife South Africa AGM after-dinner talk, also by Peter Steyn, a special May edition of *Promerops* (the Club's magazine) and a year 'wrap-up' party reviewing all the events, members can certainly look forward to 2008.

A major conservation fundraising initiative will also be year-long. Whilst there are many deserving causes, the decision has been made that all monies raised will be presented to the Albatross Task Force, part of the BLSA Marine & Seabird Programme to help save the albatross and other endangered seabirds. Leon Fouché, a gifted young artist has been commissioned to paint a Grey-headed Albatross *Thalassarche chrysostoma*. The original, and limit-

ed edition prints of this, plus other prizes will be used in raffles locally and internationally, including at the British Birdwatching Fair at Rutland Water in August, in anticipation of raising up to R100,000. Full details are available on the Club's website ([www.capebirdclub.org.za](http://www.capebirdclub.org.za)), by telephone (021 559 0726 in South Africa), or e-mail ([info@capebirdclub.org.za](mailto:info@capebirdclub.org.za)).

*Mel Tripp, Cape Bird Club*







### Donations

ABC has not previously published names of donors, but many members do add a few pounds to their regular payments, whilst others sometimes send a more substantial donation. We are most grateful for any donation, however small, as we always have more worthy applications for conservation projects than we can afford to support. In 2007 we received more than 60 donations from members, as well as four from Corporate Sponsors. Thank you especially to Matthew Boyer, M. H. Broadridge, Joost Brouwer, Steve Chastell, David Fox, Gregory Dwain Jackson, Mark Klym, Rod Leslie, Calum Mackenzie, Roswitha Pittocopitis, Andrew Sharpe, Stewart Smith and C. D. & L. C. Spooner. Friends of Kelsey Park in the UK also kindly donated a substantial sum to the Grey Parrot *Psittacus erithacus* project in Kakamega Forest in Kenya. Corporate Sponsors who made donations to the Conservation Fund included Rockjumper (the Nahan's Francolin *Francolinus nahani* project), Sarus Bird Tours (Grey Parrot project), Birding Africa and WildWings.

### Recent applications

Nine new applications for conservation awards had been received by October 2007, of which eight have been, or will be, given ABC awards. Three were from the Department of Ornithology at the National Museum in Nairobi, Kenya, namely a proposed study of Blue Swallows *Hirundo atrocaerulea*; a study of Amani Sunbirds *Hedydipna pallidigaster*; and a survey of Malka Mari, a proposed Important Bird Area in northern Kenya close to the Ethiopian border.

The proposed Blue Swallow study is targeted towards conserving remnant wintering sites in Busia District, western Kenya, where a chain of small grasslands (some seasonally flooded) are surrounded by intensive agriculture, and grazed by livestock. The Conservation Committee considered that it was probably too late to do much for the species in the area and no award was made.

Provided concerns over safety are resolved, UK£800 will be awarded to the proposed Malkamari Expedition. Malkamari National

Park lies on the Daua River, on the Kenya/Ethiopia border. The area is largely semi-arid bushland and scrubby grassland, with riparian woodland and palms along the river. Malkamari was gazetted as a National Park in 1989, due to its reportedly high concentration of wildlife, but its avifauna is little known. However, the restricted-range White-winged Collared Dove *Streptopelia reichenowi* and Juba Weaver *Ploceus dichrocephalus*, two species of the Jubba and Shabeelle Valleys Endemic Bird Area, are believed to occur along the Daua River.

The Amani Sunbird project has received an award of UK£650. This sunbird, treated as Endangered, is a coastal forest endemic with a small and fragmented range, known mainly from Arabuko-Sokoke Forest (Kenya) and the East Usambara and Udzungwa mountains (Tanzania). The former area faces major threats from increased clearance of its valuable trees for poles, carving and fuelwood, greatly affecting its Amani Sunbird population. Given ongoing forest clearance and degradation over much of its range, the species' population is in sharp decline. The general objective of this project is to establish the conservation and ecological status of Amani Sunbird in order to evaluate potential threats, and to gather data essential for specific management plans for the species and its habitats.

Two successful applications were received from BirdLife Botswana. The first was for a repeat survey of Short-clawed Larks *Certhilauda*



Short-clawed Lark / L'Alouette à ongles courts  
*Certhilauda chuana* (Phil Palmer)



*chuana* in south-east Botswana. Surveys in South Africa have revealed a marked decline in the numbers of this restricted-range lark (see *Bull. ABC* 14: 58–61). BirdLife Botswana has been surveying suitable habitat in at least six squares using the same methodology as used in the early 1990s by Marc Herremans. Field work was undertaken in November–December 2007, and January 2008, at the start of the breeding season when birds were singing. This project received UK£850. The second project involves continuing transects in the Central Kalahari Game Reserve. In 2002, visiting birders, Jim Glover and Christine Skinner undertook some counts of key bird species along transects in the reserve. In 2006–07 Neil Taylor refined these and made counts in the dry season of all birds of conservation concern. The ABC award will extend this work to the wet season and train local counterparts to continue bird monitoring there. The 2006–07 surveys provided much useful information on vultures, other raptors and many terrestrial species, including frequencies to be calculated for globally or nationally threatened species such as Lappet-faced *Torgos tracheliotus*, White-backed *Gyps africanus* and White-headed Vultures *Trigonoceps occipitalis*, Martial Eagle *Polemaetus bellicosus*, Bateleur *Terathopius ecaudatus* and Kori Bustard *Ardeotis kori*. This project received UK£650.

An award of UK£1,000 was made to a University of Brighton (UK) expedition, organised by Donald Scott, to survey birds and mammals in the Spiny Forest of Madagascar, together with local ornithologists and other experts. The ABC award will be allocated to the bursaries and living expenses of the Malagasy counterparts.

An award of UK£500 was made to Hichem Azafzaf, in Tunisia, for a ten-day **tern ringing expedition to Libya** in August 2007. Hichem was working with UNEP-MAP-RAC/SPA (Regional Activity Center for Specially Protected Areas) and EGA (Environment General Authority in Libya) to organise the ringing programme. In 2006 the main Lesser Crested Tern *Sterna bengalensis* colony, at Ghara island, in Libya, was visited. The subspecies *S. b. emigrata* is endemic to the Mediterranean and is small



Lesser Crested Tern / Sterne voyageuse  
*Sterna bengalensis* (Pete Ryan)

(<4,000 breeding pairs) and very local. Moreover, little is known concerning its movements or threats. Colour ringing of the main colony at Ghara Island should provide important data in respect of these issues.

Michael Mills of the Percy FitzPatrick Institute for African Ornithology (South Africa) was given an award to catalogue an important collection of bird skins collected in Angola. The aim is to produce an electronic and photographic catalogue of the c.46,000-specimen Lubango collection. The collection not only contains important distributional information on little-known species, but also could shed light on several unanswered taxonomic questions. Fortunately, the collection survived the war, unlike its counterpart in Dundo. Although some data were summarised by Pinto and Dean, this is a vast, relatively untapped source of ornithological knowledge of Angola. A visit in 2005 indicated that most skins were in fair condition and well labelled, and highlighted the potential importance of the collection (see [www.birdsangola.org/publubango06.htm](http://www.birdsangola.org/publubango06.htm)). A team of 6–8 will visit Lubango for two weeks in the first half of 2008, and will comprise South Africans and Angolans, in a collaborative effort not only to catalogue the collection but also to build capacity among Angolans. The project will be jointly lead by Michael Mills and Pedro vaz Pinto, core members of Birds Angola. Other members will include Richard Dean, staff from South African



museums with experience in maintaining collections, and at least one other Angolan national. Besides a specimen database, a list of recommendations for maintaining and improving the state of Angola's most important ornithological collection will be made. The project was awarded UK£1,000.

The sum of UK£300 has gone to assist students at the University of Makerere, Kampala, Uganda, for various bird studies. In the past some useful projects have been carried out under the direction of Derek Pomeroy.

Reports

Interim reports have been received for several projects including the study of Grey Parrots in Kakamega Forest, Kenya, which Sarus Tours and Friends of Kelsey Park in the UK have kindly sponsored, and a Mauritius Fody *Foudia rubra* and Mauritius Olive White-eye *Zosterops chloronotus* update.

Tsimanampesotse National Park in Madagascar

Sama Zefania has sent a report on 'Promoting further public awareness in biodiversity conservation at Tsimanampesotse National Park in Madagascar'. His project was funded by ABC as well as by ANGAP and WWF Toliara. He produced 100 posters in Malagasy, French and English on the park, and 500 brochures in French and English, which were distributed to major tourist hotels, travel agencies and in Efoetse village, where the local ANGAP manager stayed and through which tourists pass to reach the park. He also gave evening presentations in five villages around the park to promote awareness of relevant conservation issues.



Rüppell's Griffon Vulture / Vautour de Rüppell  
*Gyps rueppellii* (Mark Anderson)

Vultures of Yankari Game Reserve, northern Nigeria

This work was undertaken by Tende Talatu and colleagues from Savanna Conservation Nigeria. During the survey period (January–October 2007), three species of vultures were regularly encountered in the reserve: White-backed *Gyps africanus*, Rüppell's Griffon *G. rueppellii* and White-headed Vultures *Trigonoceps occipitalis*. Two were encountered only once: Eurasian Griffon *G. fulvus* and Hooded Vultures *Necrosyrtes monachus*. A maximum 18 individuals, eight White-backed, three Eurasian Griffon and seven Rüppell's Griffon Vultures, were observed together at Wikki camp on 6 October 2007, and the highest numbers generally were at the end of the rainy season, i.e. October. During the rains few were seen. Of particular interest were the two sightings of *G. fulvus*, a Palearctic migrant; the first record was in March 2005. Lappet-faced Vulture *Torgos tracheliotus* was recorded in 1981 and March 2005, but not encountered during this survey. Hooded Vulture (a strict commensal) was formerly common around Wikki camp, but was recorded only once during 2007, presumably because the camp is no longer populated.

In India a drastic decline of >95% in vultures has been attributed to the anti-inflammatory drug Diclofenac. Although this drug does not seem to be used to treat cattle in Nigeria, vultures were killed in large numbers in the early 1980s, for commercial purposes, using a highly poisonous chemical, Gamaline 20. Hunting vultures in Nigeria for meat could be a factor in their

**Have you visited Tsimanampesotse National Park?**

**Biological value 1 of site**

If you are interested in a species you can see the...  
[Image of a bird]

**Biological value 2 of site**

If you are interested in a species you can see the...  
[Image of a bird]

**Biological value 3 of site**

If you are interested in a species you can see the...  
[Image of a bird]

**Biological value 4 of site**

If you are interested in a species you can see the...  
[Image of a bird]

**Biological value 5 of site**

If you are interested in a species you can see the...  
[Image of a bird]

**Biological value 6 of site**

If you are interested in a species you can see the...  
[Image of a bird]

**Biological value 7 of site**

If you are interested in a species you can see the...  
[Image of a bird]

**Biological value 8 of site**

If you are interested in a species you can see the...  
[Image of a bird]

**Biological value 9 of site**

If you are interested in a species you can see the...  
[Image of a bird]

**Biological value 10 of site**

If you are interested in a species you can see the...  
[Image of a bird]

decline. Although the survey did not make any specific comparison between protected and unprotected areas, unlike Thiollay (2006), no vultures were seen outside the reserve, whilst the decline noted by Thiollay (2006) is also clearly apparent within the Yankari reserve. There is currently probably just 25–30 vultures present there, as opposed to at least 600 in the 1980s, although several species are still breeding within the protected area.

### **Impact of oil spills and gas flares in the Niger Delta**

Rufus Idris has submitted an interim report on this study which is ongoing. Existing data and references have been sourced and Rufus and two field officers have visited the study area to identify possible challenges/constraints to successful implementation, and further strengthen relationships with communities in the delta. This densely populated region constitutes Nigeria's largest wetland and the third largest wetland in the world (at c.70,000 km<sup>2</sup>). Some 20 million people belonging to more than 40 ethnic groups and speaking c.250 dialects live there. Their livelihoods are primarily based on fishing and farming.

There are 606 oil and gas fields in the delta, 355 onshore and 251 offshore, of which 193 are producing. Many forms of oil-generated pollution were evident throughout the region, farming and fishing have become impossible or extremely difficult in oil-affected areas, drinking water has become scarce, whilst malnourishment and disease appear common. The remains of dead birds were found close to oil spills and polluted surface water. Burnt habitat and nests were also seen. Rising sea levels, due to global warming, are also of concern, as the delta is naturally subsidence-prone. Measurements showed a subsidence rate of more than 2.5 cm/p.a. A 1-m rise in sea level could flood as much as 18,000 km<sup>2</sup> and force up to 80% of the population to relocate.

Oil spills and gas flares were discovered to be more severe in Bayelsa and River State, where local communities are subjected to constant heat, light and noise from these sources. Seventeen onshore flow stations were identified in Bayelsa alone. Other problems identified include difficulties of access (less than 20% of the region is accessible by road) and social unrest. A growing anger among local inhabitants at the damage

caused to their health and ecosystem by oil production has made the Niger Delta a zone of major confrontations between the inhabitants and the multinational oil companies. The area is now characterised by militancy, hostage-taking, murders, pipeline vandalism, extra-judicial executions, arbitrary detentions and draconian restrictions. The crisis has led to some foreign oil and gas companies threatening to withdraw from the delta if the current violence continues. These issues have also affected field work in most of the Niger Delta. The existence of physical and legal constraints to free passage and free circulation of information from government agencies and the oil companies is a major challenge.

Well-structured questionnaires, data sheets and the species identification manual have been found adequate and capable of addressing the study objectives. Questionnaires are being used to extract anecdotal and traditional knowledge of bird life, possible threats to bird populations, and characteristic behaviours.

### **Bird surveys in the Uvidunda Mountains, Tanzania, and Yabello, Ethiopia**

Surveys were conducted in late August 2007 by Jeremiah Kyomo *et al.* from the University of Dar es Salaam (Department of Zoology and Wildlife Conservation), in the Chonwe, Pwate and Vidunda areas, in the southern Uvidunda Mountains, Tanzania, to describe the importance of the forest to a range of bird species. The survey team plans to conduct a similar study in the Mgwila and Migomberama areas, in the central and northern Uvidunda Mountains.

ABC has also received the final report of Project Yabello 2005, concerning the effects of habitat alteration on Ethiopian endemic birds.

### **Corrections to Bull. ABC 14 (2)**

The Spotted Ground Thrush *Zoothera guttata* survey was not to have been in Kakamega Forest, as erroneously stated in *Bull. ABC* 14: 127, but in Arabuko-Sokoke Forest.

Neil Baker has pointed out that the Wildlife Conservation Society of Tanzania in their ABC-funded coastal forests survey would be unlikely to find Spotted Ground Thrushes or East Coast Akalats *Sheppardia gunningi* in Kilwa forests.

*Steph Tyler*



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# Towards a conservation plan for the Cape Griffon *Gyps coprotheres*: identifying priorities for research and conservation

André Boshoff<sup>a</sup> and Mark Anderson<sup>b</sup>

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Vers un plan de conservation pour le Vautour chasseur *Gyps coprotheres*: identifier les priorités de recherche et de conservation. L'aire de distribution et la population du Vautour chasseur *Gyps coprotheres*, une espèce endémique sud-africaine menacée, continuent à diminuer. Comme premier pas vers la compilation et la mise en œuvre d'un plan stratégique de conservation, un atelier a été organisé en Afrique du Sud, le 12 mars 2006. Pour le rapport, voir [www.nmmu.ac.za/ace](http://www.nmmu.ac.za/ace); un bref aperçu est présenté ici.

Despite over 30 years of research and conservation attention, resulting in the production of over 1,500 scientific, semi-scientific, popular and educational papers, articles and reports, the global range and population of the Cape Griffon (=Cape Vulture) *Gyps coprotheres*, a threatened southern African endemic, continues to decrease, seemingly inexorably. The species is listed as Vulnerable in the South African Red Data Book (Anderson 2000). The main reason for the lack of success in halting and reversing the species' decline is considered to be the absence of an overall subcontinental conservation plan, resulting in conservation efforts being fragmented, uncoordinated and not priority-driven. As a first step towards the compilation and implementation of a strategic conservation plan, an expert workshop was organised, with the overall aim of identifying research and conservation priorities, and kickstarting a process to compile and implement a practicable conservation plan. The full report from the workshop is available at [www.nmmu.ac.za/ace](http://www.nmmu.ac.za/ace); a brief account is presented below.

A group of 21 persons, including an independent facilitator, was invited to attend the workshop, which took place on 12 March 2006 in Harrismith, Free State Province, South Africa. The 20 participants represented a range of southern African vulture conservation and research interests, expertise and experience. Comprehensive geographical coverage of participants was achieved, with workers active in South Africa, Lesotho, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Namibia—i.e. all range states—being present.

Consensus was reached on the conservation goal for the species—to stabilise the Cape Griffon

population. Sixteen known or suspected mortality factors were listed, and for each of these the current scenario (e.g. what is known and unknown), research requirements and proposed conservation actions were discussed, and a summary thereof was captured in a matrix. Following this, each participant was granted 16 votes (=the total number of listed mortality factors) and asked to allocate them, as they saw fit, to one or more of the 16 factors, according to the perceived relative importance of each factor. The outcome of this simple ranking procedure is presented in Table 1.

At the workshop it was agreed that an appropriate monitoring and evaluation programme, to track demographic changes in relation to conservation actions, and to detect the emergence of new threats, needs to be designed and implemented. However, the operation of such a programme will be largely meaningless unless 'on-the-ground' conservation actions are implemented, as a priority.

Since some 18 'core' colonies hold c.80% of the Cape Griffon population, conservation action must focus on them. A Cape Griffon Task Force (CGTF), comprising a coordinator and a group of core colony 'champions' and associated volunteers, will be established. Its overall role will be to oversee the compilation and implementation of conservation plans, at local and regional levels, for each of the 18 'core' colonies, and to exercise accountability for the effectiveness of the implementation of these plans. Action plans for individual core colonies are to be closely guided by the outcomes of this workshop, especially as expressed in Table 1 above and in the matrix (see Boshoff & Anderson 2006), but unique local circumstances must be catered for. The Birds of Prey Working

**Table 1.** Ranking of the 16 factors that are considered contributory to the decline of the Cape Griffon *Gyps coprotheres*, as determined by 16 (the number of participants present when the ranking exercise was conducted) workshop participants. Priority ranking values are qualified by numbers of votes per factor (1 = highest priority, 16 = lowest priority).

**Tableau 1.** Classement des 16 facteurs considérés comme contribuant au déclin du Vautour chasseur *Gyps coprotheres* par 16 participants à l'atelier (le nombre de participants présents lors de l'exercice). Le classement s'est fait selon le nombre de votes par facteur (1 = la plus haute priorité, 16 = la priorité la plus basse).

Factor	Number (and percentage) of total votes	Priority ranking
Decrease in the amount of carrion	54 (21.1)	1
Inadvertent poisoning	34 (13.3)	2
Electrocution on electricity transmission structures	33 (12.9)	3
Exposure to agro-chemicals	24 (9.4)	4
Loss of foraging habitat (to e.g. agriculture, urban development)	20 (7.8)	5
Unsustainable harvesting for traditional uses	20 (7.8)	6*
Lack of an awareness/conservation ethic	18 (7.0)	7
Collision with electricity cables and tower guy wires	14 (5.5)	8
Disturbance at roosting and breeding sites	13 (5.1)	9
Direct persecution by landowners	12 (4.7)	10
Drowning in high-walled farm reservoirs	6 (2.3)	11
Shortage of bone material in the diet	3 (1.2)	12
Lack of roosting and breeding sites	3 (1.2)	13
Variation in carcass composition	1 (0.4)	14
Inappropriate food items	1 (0.4)	15
Lack of surface water	0 (0.0)	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>256 (100.0)</b>	

\*In April 2007, one year after the workshop was held, a report commissioned by KZN Wildlife (Mander *et al.* 2007) revealed alarmingly high levels of harvesting of Cape Griffons in parts of South Africa for traditional medicine purposes; these levels are considered to be unsustainable and it is predicted that this factor will significantly hasten the extinction of this species. Had this information been available at the time of the workshop, it is highly likely that the 'harvesting for traditional uses' mortality factor would have received a higher ranking than it did.

Group of South Africa's Endangered Wildlife Trust will render assistance to the CGTF by providing a coordinating role, providing interim administrative support, and investigating the funding and appointment of a full-time or part-time CGTF coordinator.

## References

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Centre for African Conservation Ecology, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. [downloadable from [www.nmmu.ac.za/ace](http://www.nmmu.ac.za/ace)]

Mander, M., Diederichs, N., Ntuli, L., Mavundla, K., Williams, V. & McKean, S. 2007. *Survey of the Trade in Vultures for the Traditional Health Industry in South Africa*. Everton: Futureworks.

<sup>a</sup>Centre for African Conservation Ecology, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, PO Box 77000, Port Elizabeth 6031, South Africa. E-mail: [andre.boshoff@nmmu.ac.za](mailto:andre.boshoff@nmmu.ac.za)

<sup>b</sup>Department of Tourism, Environment and Conservation, Private Bag X6102, Kimberley 8300, Northern Cape, South Africa. E-mail: [manderson@half.ncape.gov.za](mailto:manderson@half.ncape.gov.za)

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## Corrigenda *Bull. ABC* 14 (2)

In Table 1 on p.141, 'Congo-Brazzaville' should be replaced by 'Congo-Kinshasa' in the 'Distribution' column for the following species: Eastern Wattled Cuckoo-shrike *Campephaga oriolinus*, Slender-tailed Cisticola *Cisticola melanurus*, Kabobo Apalis *Apalis kaboboensis*, Lake Lufira Weaver *Ploceus ruweti*, Golden-naped Weaver *Ploceus aureonucha*, Yellow-legged Weaver *Ploceus flavipes* and Black-lored Waxbill *Estrilda nigriloris*.

In the caption to Figure 6 on p. 198, 'Congo-Kinshasa' should be replaced by 'Congo-Brazzaville'.

## Announcements

### Robin Guy 1932–2008

Well-known South African birder Robin Guy, who had just turned 75 on 26 December 2007, was shot and killed during an attempted robbery in Johannesburg, on 2 January 2008. Guy lived in Underberg, at the base of the southern Drakensberg, from where he ran birding trips, specialising in nearby Sani Pass and Lesotho. Numerous birders from all over the world stayed at his guest cottage, enjoyed his warm hospitality and engaging company, and visited the Sani Pass in his four-wheel drive which he had specifically adapted for these trips. He had recently sold his business but, with his wife Bella, remained partly involved. A geologist by profession, he had been a game ranger in the Natal Parks Board before taking up farming in the Drakensberg, whose history and ecology he was especially passionate about. He and his wife had been in Johannesburg at a family member's home when two robbers entered the property and, for no apparent reason, shot him in the chest. He died instantly.

### Tsogo Maiphetho

Tsogo Maiphetho died as the result of a road accident in December, while travelling from Maun to Gaborone to assist in BirdLife Botswana's (BLB) Short-clawed Lark *Certhilauda chuana* survey that is part-funded by ABC (see pp. 5–6). Tsogo had worked diligently for BirdLife Botswana for two years as Assistant Conservation Office in Maun. He had made rapid strides as a birder and was beginning to play a key role in managing guide training courses. Not only was Tsogo a keen birder, but in his quiet way he encouraged many local people in Maun to develop their interests in this field. He also played a pivotal role in developing a Site Support Group at Lake Ngami Important Bird Area. Tsogo also undertook waterbird counts along some of the important rivers draining the Okavango Delta. He will be deeply missed by his parents and his colleagues in BirdLife Botswana.

## Requests for information

### 'Birds and People' in Africa

Mark Cocker and wildlife photographer David Tipling are working on a book *Birds and People* that will present the results of the largest-ever survey of the multitudinous ways in which humans and birds interact. The aim is to include the experiences, stories and words of as many individual contributors as possible. It is hoped that this will capture the numerous meanings and values which birds possess, but which are not necessarily recorded in conventional ornithological literature. Birds are a major inspiration for music and art. They appear on bank notes and coins, on flags, in business logos, and in designs advertising every conceivable product. They act as national emblems and as totems of local communities. Nowhere is this intimate relationship between birds and humans more apparent than in Africa. For example, the Hamerkop *Scopus umbretta* is of great symbolic importance for many communities and the object of many beliefs and stories, which often operate, in turn, like a taboo to protect the birds themselves. Hamerkops also build an extraordinary nest that occasionally incorporates an eccentric miscellany of human artefacts. The 'Birds and People' project is about the two-way exchange exemplified by the Hamerkop.

The text will be arranged in taxonomic order and is expected to cover 500–1,000 bird species worldwide. Some African examples that the authors are keen to include are given below. These are only a starting point to jog memories and spark ideas. You may have memorable experiences which reveal the part birds play in our emotional and spiritual lives, or may know of a book, story, painting, piece of music etc. that you think should be included.

**Ostrich** *Struthio camelus*—A powerfully symbolic bird and the object of regional stories and beliefs; feathers and eggshells are still widely used in jewellery and as ornaments.

**Storks**—Marabous *Leptoptilos crumeniferus* are commonly found in urban areas and infamous for their eccentric diet that includes anything from elephant hide to butcher's knives.

**Vultures**—African tolerance of vultures is central to the success of several species, but they are also used in traditional magico-medicinal practices and some are eaten.

**Guinea fowl**—The beautiful spotted feathers are a key source of decoration.

**Pigeons**—Symbolic importance of the Dodo *Raphus cucullatus* and its status as an icon of extinction. Accounts of very large gatherings (e.g. European Turtle Doves *Streptopelia turtur* in West Africa); mnemonics for songs of common doves (e.g. Emerald-spotted Wood Dove *Turtur chalcospilos* in South Africa).

**Parrots**—Trapped for pet trade and kept as household pets; feathers used for decoration.

**Turacos**—Status as cultural totem (e.g. Bannerman's Turaco *Tauraco bannermani* in the Cameroon highlands).

**Honeyguides**—Cooperation between traditional honey-gatherers and Greater Honeyguide *Indicator indicator*; beliefs associated with honeyguides.

**Owls**—Fear and cultural taboos about owls are widespread; owls are also used in many magico-medicinal rituals.

**Swifts**—Symbolic importance; unusual nesting locations in buildings and walls (Alpine Swifts *Tachymarptis melba* in city walls of Fez).

**Swallows**—Their status as symbols of season or weather; use as medicine; nesting in unusual human-made structures; huge non-breeding roosts and their exploitation for food.

**Wagtails**—Status of migrants as markers of the season.

**Weavers**—Colonies in proximity to people and human dwellings; possible uses of nests.

**Queleas**—Reputation as the 'avian locust'; accounts of huge flocks, depredations and pest control.

Contributions can be sent by e-mail to markcocker@randomhouse.co.uk or by surface post to: Birds and People, Jonathan Cape, Random House, 20 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V 2SA UK. There is also a dedicated website ([www.birdsandpeople.org](http://www.birdsandpeople.org)) where regular updates on the project are given and where anyone can participate directly in live discussions concerning species that are being written. All contributions will be acknowledged.

### Nest photographs wanted

Peter Castell is currently working on a DVD: *Bird Nests, Eggs, Nestlings and Fledglings of the Western Palearctic Region*, which is more extensive than that in *BWP*, extending east as far as the Aral Sea and to the Yenesei River (rather than the Urals), and including the entire Arabian Peninsula. Currently he has images of c.635 breeding species, out of a total of c.750. For many there is fairly comprehensive coverage, with images of habitat, nest site, several different nests, showing variations in nests, eggs and young, and young from hatching to fledging. For others coverage is scant, e.g. only a picture of a nest hole in a tree for Levillant's Woodpecker *Picus levaillanti*! The list below is of those species breeding in Africa for which photos are still required. Images will be included on the DVD even if taken outside the region. The publishers will pay for the use of the photographs only in exceptional cases (because there will be c.5,000 images), but will fully acknowledge the photographer and will supply free copies of the DVD to those who supply photographs.

Fea's Petrel *Pterodroma feae* (egg, young); Zino's Petrel *P. madeira* (egg, young); Bulwer's Petrel *Bulweria bulwerii* (young); Cory's Shearwater



*Calonectris diomedea* (small young); Cape Verde Shearwater *C. (d.) edwardsii* (egg, young); North Atlantic Little Shearwater *Puffinus (assimilis) baroli* (large young); White-faced Storm-petrel *Pelagodroma marina* (young); Madeiran Storm-petrel *Oceanodroma castro* (young); Red-billed Tropicbird *Phaethon aethereus* (eggs, small young); Pink-backed Pelican *Pelecanus rufescens* (eggs, young); African Darter *Anhinga melanogaster* (eggs); Goliath Heron *Ardea goliath* (young); Hamerkop *Scopus umbretta* (young); Abdim's Stork *Ciconia abdimii* (small young); Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus* (large young); Lammergeier *Gypaetus barbatus* (eggs, young); Bateleur *Terathopius ecaudatus* (eggs, young); Tawny Eagle *Aquila rapax* (young); Verreaux's Eagle *A. verreauxii* (eggs, young); Lanner Falcon *Falco biarmicus* (young); Barbary Falcon *F. pelegrinoides* (eggs, young); Harlequin Quail *Coturnix delegorguei* (young); Barbary Partridge *Alectoris barbara* (eggs, young); Double-spurred Francolin *Francolinus bicalcaratus* (eggs, young); Kurrichane Buttonquail (Andalusian Hemipode) *Turnix sylvaticus* (young); Baillon's Crake *Porzana pusilla* (eggs, young); Arabian Bustard *Ardeotis arabs* (eggs, young); Crab-plover *Dromas ardeola* (eggs, young); Greater Painted-snipe *Rostratula benghalensis* (large young); Grey-headed Gull *Larus cirrocephalus* (eggs, young); Royal Tern *Sterna maxima* (eggs, young); Sooty Tern *S.*

*fuscata* (eggs, young); Brown Noddy *Anous stolidus* (young); Spotted Sandgrouse *Pterocles senegallus* (eggs, large young); Crowned Sandgrouse *P. coronatus* (eggs, young); Bruce's Green Pigeon *Treron waalia* (large young); African Olive Pigeon *Columba arquatrix* (eggs, young); Trocaz Pigeon *C. trocaz* (eggs, young); Bolle's Pigeon *C. bollii* (eggs); Laurel Pigeon *C. junoniae* (eggs, young); African Collared Dove *Streptopelia roseogrisea* (large young); Dusky Turtle Dove *S. lugens* (young); African Scops Owl *Otus senegalensis* (eggs, young); Mountain (Abyssinian) Nightjar *Caprimulgus poliocephalus* (young); Plain Nightjar *C. inornatus* (eggs, young); Nubian Nightjar *C. nubicus* (eggs, young); Egyptian Nightjar *C. aegyptius* (eggs, young); African Palm Swift *Cypsiurus parvus* (young); Cape Verde Swift *Apus alexandri* (eggs, young); Pallid Swift *A. pallidus* (eggs, young); Plain Swift *A. unicolor* (eggs, young); Collared Kingfisher *Halcyon chloris* (fledged young); White-throated Bee-eater *Merops albicollis* (fledged young); Abyssinian Roller *Coracias abyssinicus* (fledged young); Levaillant's Woodpecker *Picus vaillantii* (fledged young); Singing Bush Lark *Mirafra cantillans* (young); Thick-billed Lark *Rhamphocoris clotbey* (young); Dupont's Lark *Chersophilus duponti* (large young); Raso Lark *Alauda razae* (small young); Black Bush Robin *Cercotrichas podobe* (young); Mourning Wheatear *Oenanthe lugens*

(eggs, large young); Red-breasted Wheatear *O. bottae* (eggs, young); Clamorous Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus stentoreus* (large young); Cape Verde Warbler *A. brevipennis* (large young); Western Olivaceous Warbler *Hippolais (pallida) opaca* (eggs, young); Canary Islands Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus canariensis* (young); Brown Woodland Warbler *P. umbrovirens* (small young); African Desert Warbler *Sylvia (nana) deserti* (young); Madeira Firecrest *Regulus (ignicapillus) madeirensis* (eggs, young); Canary Islands Goldcrest *R. (regulus) teneriffae* (young); Streaked Scrub Warbler *Scotocerca inquieta* (young); Atlas Flycatcher *Ficedula (ficedula) speculigera* (eggs, young); Fulvous Babbler *Turdoides fulva* (young); Algerian Nuthatch *Sitta ledanti* (nest site, fledged young); Rosy-patched Bush-shrike *Rhodophoneus cruentus* (eggs, young); Fan-tailed Raven *Corvus rhipidurus* (eggs, large young); Alpine Chough *Pyrrhocorax graculus* (large or fledged young); Violet-backed Starling *Cinnyricinclus leucogaster* (eggs, young); Iago Sparrow *Passer iagoensis* (eggs, young); Sudan Golden Sparrow *P. luteus* (eggs, young); Bush Petronia *Petronia dentata* (eggs, young); Streaked Weaver *Ploceus manyar* (eggs, young); Blue Chaffinch *Fringilla teydea* (eggs, young); Azores Bullfinch *Pyrrhula (pyrrhula) murina* (eggs, young).

# Africa Round-up



## General

### Twelfth PAOC, 7–12 September 2008, Cape Town, South Africa

The 12th Pan-African Ornithological Congress (PAOC) takes place on 7–12 September 2008. It will be held at the Goudini Spa Conference Centre, c.80 km north-east of Cape Town, and easily accessible off the Cape Town–Johannesburg road. Goudini Spa lies at the interface between the vineyards of the Breede River Valley and the fynbos on the surrounding mountains, making it an appropriate venue for a conference entitled *Birds and People: Interaction, Utilisation and Conservation*. The conference website is at [www.paoc12.org](http://www.paoc12.org).

This conference now takes place every four years; the first was in 1957. This 12th conference brings us to the 50th anniversary, making it the longest-running scientific conference with a pan-African scope. The 11th PAOC was held in Tunisia in 2004, and the previous two conferences were in West Africa (Ghana) and East Africa (Uganda), making it southern Africa's turn to host the event.

All delegates will be accommodated at the conference centre and will eat there. The Local Organizing Committee has negotiated good rates: there will be two levels of accommodation, standard and luxury. Accommodation costs appear on the website. The conference centre has more than 500 beds, making it unlikely that space will be a limiting factor—the largest PAOC to date has only been two-thirds this size.

The Wednesday of this Monday–Friday conference is 'Excursion Day'. There is a wide choice; examples include a pelagic, a guided tour of the penguin colony on Robben Island, and observing the arriving waders at West Coast

National Park. Excursion costs vary, and bookings will be taken in sequence for fully registered delegates. Opportunities also exist for pre- and post-conference tours.

Source: Les Underhill, Chair, Local Organizing Committee

### Proceedings of 11th PAOC

The 11th Pan-African Ornithological Congress proceedings were published as the June 2007 issue (vol. 78 pt. 2) of *Ostrich*. As one would expect for a journal issue of over 400 pages, there is an enormous amount of interesting ornithology. Whilst an introductory article provides an overview of all 11 PAOC events held so far, the remainder of the volume contains the main scientific contributions divided into sections. Not all presentations delivered at the congress resulted in a paper, but there is still an impressive array. The only plenary as a full paper concerns an important overview of the objectives and priorities for the conservation of birds and biodiversity in Africa (in French, as are several other papers). Another three are abstracts. Following this are sections entitled: Birds and People (one paper + four abstracts), Conservation (5 + 17), Cranes (5 + 2), Bird Biology (15 + 21), Migration (7 + 10), Raptors (6 + a roundtable discussion report), Seabirds (5 + 6), Waterbirds (8 + 20) and Waterbird Sites (5 + 14). Most are in English.

Adrian Craig has done a sterling job as editor in successfully bringing the proceedings to publication well before the next congress (see above). The 11th congress was the first to be held in North Africa and there was a strong representation from that area, which was new to many of the other delegates, both in terms of the science being done and the conservation priorities, not to mention of course the birding. The Association Les Amis des Oiseaux should also be congratulated

on their organisation of a congress which attracted delegates from 23 African and 14 other countries.

Source: Peter Lack in litt.  
January 2007

### 25th International Ornithological Congress 2010

The 25th International Ornithological Congress (IOC) will be held in Campos do Jordão, Brazil, on 22–28 August 2010. The Scientific Program Committee (SPC) has been formed and a website established ([www.i-o-c.org](http://www.i-o-c.org) or [www.ib.usp.br/25ioc](http://www.ib.usp.br/25ioc)). The SPC is inviting symposium proposals for the next IOC. These should be aimed at the general ornithologist and provide up-to-date coverage of current ornithological research. Each symposium will include two keynote addresses that should summarise the global progress in the field over the last four years and address priorities for future research. Other speakers will be chosen by the conveners, with guidance from the SPC, and will include persons who have submitted abstracts identifying the particular symposium they would like to join. The call for contributed papers (which will be in early 2009) will include a box that contributors can check if they wish to be considered for specific symposia. Proposals for symposia must be received on or before 1 June 2008, and should be sent as an e-mail attachment to the chair of the SPC, Carol M. Vleck, e-mail [ioc2010@iastate.edu](mailto:ioc2010@iastate.edu), or if that is not possible, to Carol M. Vleck, Dept. of Ecology, Evolution & Organismal Biology, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011, USA.

Please provide a title of the symposium, names, institution or affiliation, addresses, phone, fax, e-mail addresses of both organisers, first and second keynote speakers, and describe (max. 400 words) goals,



objectives, importance of the symposium and outline briefly what each keynote speaker will cover, giving a preliminary title if possible. Justify (max. 250 words) why this symposium is important and timely and why it will be of interest to participants. If you cannot find a co-convenor from another continent or country, explain why. The justification will not appear in the programme or on the website.

All proposals will be reviewed by the SPC in August 2008 and symposium organisers will be notified as to whether their proposal has been accepted shortly thereafter. The committee may recommend combining two symposia or substituting speakers. The IOC is unable to provide any financial assistance to symposium organisers or participants. We ask that symposium organisers have a firm commitment from keynote speakers to attend the meeting. Once a proposal has been accepted and the speakers finalised, we will request abstracts for each of the keynote talks. Summaries of accepted symposia will be posted on the website. As always, the conference proceedings will be published, so speakers must submit a paper on their presentation.

Source: Carol Vleck, 2010 IOC Scientific Program Committee Chair, in litt. December 2007

### Vulture-killing drug on sale in Africa

Diclofenac, the veterinary drug that caused the catastrophic population crash of vulture species in Asia, has been licensed for use in Tanzania. This was confirmed during investigations by the BirdLife Partner in that country, the Wildlife Conservation Society of Tanzania. This development could be disastrous for African vultures. Without action by governments and veterinary associations to ban the use of Diclofenac for veterinary purposes, the drug is likely to be very difficult to control. Since the patent for the drug expired, it has been produced in generic form by hundreds of manufacturers worldwide, and is sold under dozens of different names. The manufacturer of

the brand found in Tanzania exports the drug to 15 African countries. There is actually no need for Diclofenac, as research by BirdLife Partners has established that there are safe alternative drugs available.

Source: [www.birdlife.org](http://www.birdlife.org), October 2007

### Wing-tagged Montagu's Harriers

Fergus Crystal is currently involved in a three-year study of Montagu's Harriers *Circus pygargus* in Extremadura, south-west Spain. His work is based at a recuperation centre for the species, as Montagu's Harriers breeding in Spain are increasingly threatened during the breeding season by early harvesting of barley fields, its preferred nesting habitat. Fergus and his colleagues' work involves locating nests and liaising with landowners and harvesters so that the nests are spared. The recuperation centre runs a volunteer programme during the summer months, and participants are most welcome (e-mail [amus100@hotmail.com](mailto:amus100@hotmail.com)). Since 2004, chicks reared at the centre (because the adults have been injured by combine harvesters) have been ringed and marked with green plastic wing tags on their release. In addition, the current study involves trapping adults in the wild and marking them with a series of colour tags on both wings. The centre hopes to discover the wintering area/s of these birds, which probably lies within the Sahel zone of West Africa, although some birds might wander further afield, elsewhere on the continent. Observers are requested to check for any colour tags on Montagu's Harriers they encounter in Africa (there was also a large number of juveniles tagged in France in 2007). Please record the date, time, place and habitat of the sighting, and send your data to Fergus Crystal by e-mail ([ferguscrystal@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:ferguscrystal@yahoo.co.uk)).

Source: Fergus Crystal in litt. August 2007

### Mountain and Forest Buzzards: split proposed

William Clark has reviewed the status of the two subspecies of Forest/

Mountain Buzzard *Buteo oreophilus* and concluded that they should be considered species: Mountain Buzzard *B. oreophilus* of the mountains of East Africa and the Forest Buzzard *B. trizonatus* of temperate coastal and escarpment forests of South Africa. The two are separated by a gap of more than 2,000 km. Summaries of the differences in plumage and wing shape suggest that the two forms are easily distinguished in the field, and DNA evidence suggests that *oreophilus* is actually more closely related to *Buteo buteo buteo* and *trizonatus* closer to *B. b. vulpinus*, which are also occasionally considered separate species.

Source: Ostrich 78, pp 101–104

### Status of Chestnut-banded Plover

Rob Simmons (of the Percy FitzPatrick Institute in Cape Town), and others, have examined the status of Chestnut-banded Plover *Charadrius pallidus* across its range in Africa. The total population, which is concentrated at a few inaccessible, specialised and arid sites that are unprotected or threatened, is estimated at just under 18,000 birds, but just three sites—Walvis Bay and Sandwich Harbour in Namibia, and Lake Natron in Tanzania—can hold up to 87% of these during the non-breeding season, and another five sites hold more than 1% of the population (c.100 birds). There are no trends apparent in numbers and certainly no evidence of a decline. However, the authors recommend the species' conservation status should change from Least Concern to Near Threatened. At two of the sites (Walvis Bay and Lake Natron) there are threats from pollution, siltation and water abstraction, and the authors also recommend that conservation measures be enacted at these



Chestnut-banded Plover / Pluvier élégant *Charadrius pallidus* (Pete Leonard)

in particular, a process which will also benefit another threatened species, Lesser Flamingo *Phoeniconaias minor*.

Source: Bird Conserv. Intern. 17, pp 283–293

### Changes in gull taxonomy

To better reflect recent advances in knowledge of the evolution of gulls, the recently published fourth report of the Taxonomic Sub-Committee of the British Ornithologists' Union Records Committee contains recommendations relating to the taxonomy of some gulls that also occur in the ABC region. Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus* and Armenian Gull *L. armenicus* remain as treated in the ABC checklist—the former polytypic, including *fuscus*, *intermedius*, *graelii*, *heuglini*, *taimyrensis* and *barabensis*, and the latter monotypic. However, *L. cachinnans* is split into Yellow-legged Gull *L. michahellis* (polytypic, including *michahellis* and *atlantis*) and monotypic Caspian Gull *L. cachinnans*. American Herring Gull *L. smithsonianus* is split from Herring Gull *L. argentatus*.

Morphological and molecular studies also indicate that the genus *Larus*, as currently defined, is not monophyletic and the adoption of some new generic names is proposed, including *Chroicocephalus* (for Black-headed, Slender-billed and Bonaparte's Gulls) and *Hydrocoloeus* (for Little Gull).

Source: Ibis 149, pp 853–857

### A new threat to Africa's forest hornbills?

There is evidence for serious declines in several species of African hornbills (Bucerotidae), especially forest-dwellers, although none is as yet on the Endangered list. These declines are thought to be due mainly to habitat loss and fragmentation and to the bushmeat trade. However, a paper by Pepper Trail (of the US Fish & Wildlife Service) now reports a previously unrecognised import trade in some species, sometimes into the USA. Because of the lack of reporting requirements, the scale of this operation is not known in detail, but it is

clear that a review of the status of the forest species is warranted urgently.

Source: Ostrich 78, pp 609–613

### Tropical African birds survive better than temperate species

A study in Nigeria by Ross McGregor and others (from the University of St Andrews, UK) reveals that avian adult survival rates amongst tropical species are quite variable but usually somewhat higher than those of temperate species (average 62% vs. 54%). However, the difference may not be as great as had earlier been thought and certainly varies between species and between sites.

Source: Ibis 149, pp 615–618

### North Africa

#### Breeding of Purple Heron in Egypt documented

Five to ten pairs of Purple Herons *Ardea purpurea* with fledglings were found in a heronry on Bahrif Island, 5 km north of Aswan in Lake Nasser, in the second half of May 2007. At another heronry c. 50 km south of Bahrif Island, c. 10 Purple Herons were present and the species may also have bred there. This species was not previously known to breed in Egypt, and the nearest known colonies are more than 900 km to the north, in Jordan and Israel.

Source: Sandgrouse 29, pp 221–224



Purple Heron / Héron pourpré *Ardea purpurea* (Mark Anderson)

#### Massacre on the Nile

During early September 2007, one of the largest heron colonies in the Cairo area (and perhaps all of Egypt), at the southern tip of Dahab Island, was decimated. At least formerly, the colony comprised Cattle Egret

*Bubulcus ibis*, Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*, Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*, Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides* and smaller numbers of Little Bitterns *Ixobrychus minutus*. Large cranes placed on floating barges were dredging the outskirts of the colony, which was still active at the time, and it appeared that the intention was to cement the edges of the island, thereby dramatically reducing the biodiversity value of the Nile River, despite that the area is theoretically protected.

Source: S. Baha el Din in litt.  
September 2007

### Another Northern Bald Ibis sighting, in Eritrea

Following the successful tracking of some of the last remaining birds of the recently rediscovered Syrian breeding population of Northern Bald Ibises *Geronticus eremita*, to their wintering grounds in Ethiopia, in winter 2006 (*Bull. ABC* 14: 13), a young bird was seen (in mid-December 2007) on a beach in eastern Djibouti by some visiting Swedish birders. Equally unexpected was the sighting, in early December, of two adults on cliffs on the Israeli/Jordanian border, at Yardena. It appears that there is still much to learn concerning the eastern population of this globally threatened species.

Source: Br. Birds 101, p 107

### West & Central Africa

#### Avifauna of proposed Kyabobo National Park, Ghana, documented

The avifauna of the proposed Kyabobo National Park, a previously ornithologically unexplored site in eastern Ghana, has been documented by Françoise Dowsett-Lemaire and Robert Dowsett in a recent paper in *Malimbus*. The Dowsetts visited the area twice, during the rains in 2004 and in the late dry season in 2005, and identified 235 bird species, including Barred Owlet *Glaucidium capense*, Long-billed Pipit *Anthus similis*, Baumann's



Greenbul *Phyllastrephus baumanni* and Lagden's Bush-shrike *Malaconotus lagdeni*. Almost all observations of forest species represent northward extensions of their known range.

Source: *Malimbus 29*, pp 61–88

### Eurasian Griffon Vulture in Nigeria

Up to three Eurasian Griffon Vultures *Gyps fulvus* were observed in Yankari National Park, central-east Nigeria, in March 2005 (see also p. 7). This represents a large south-eastern extension of the presumed winter range of this Palearctic species.

Source: *Malimbus 29*, pp 122–123

### Baumann's Greenbul found in Cameroon

The unobtrusive and nondescript Baumann's Greenbul *Phyllastrephus baumanni*, classified as Data Deficient, was discovered near Korup National Park, south-west Cameroon, by Serge Bobo *et al.* in 2006. The species appeared to be frequent in suitable habitat—mainly farmbrush—in the area. This represents an eastward range extension of c.100 km.

Source: *Malimbus 29*, pp 130–132

### Another first for Cameroon: Red Kite

The first Red Kite *Milvus milvus* for Cameroon was observed in the Bamenda Highlands on 12 November 2003. This is the southernmost record of this Palearctic vagrant in Africa and the sixth for sub-Saharan Africa.

Source: *Malimbus 29*, pp 89–100

### Grey-necked Picathartes nesting under concrete bridges

In Lopé National Park, Gabon, two nests of Grey-necked Picathartes *Picathartes oreas* were discovered under concrete bridges. Remarkably, the road over one of the bridges is quite busy and used by many kinds of vehicles, including trucks. The vibrations caused by the traffic may explain the long and very robust construction of the nest at that site.

These are the first nests of this

species to be found on man-made structures.

Source: *Malimbus 29*, pp 126–128

## Atlantic Islands

### Cape Verde's Magnificent Frigatebird on the brink of extinction

Monitoring of the relict population of Magnificent Frigatebirds *Fregata magnificens* in the Cape Verde Islands, which is confined to the islets of Baluarte and Curral Velho, revealed that, between 1999 and 2006, the birds totally failed to reproduce. Breeding failure is thought to be due to accidental egg loss during incubation and hatching failure. The location of the nest sites—one on a shipwreck exposed to wave action and others very close to the edge of cliffs—may explain the former. Hatching failure may be due to genetic (inbreeding) or demographic imbalances (bottlenecks and inbreeding). Long-term human persecution is probably the cause of the rapid decline of the Cape Verde population in recent decades.

Conservation measures, which may still help to preserve other seabirds in the archipelago, is likely to come too late for this emblematic species, which now numbers just 4–5 adults.

Source: *Atlantic Seabirds 7*, pp 107–120

### Large numbers of Cape Verde Shearwaters counted

In a rather better state appears to be the population of the Near Threatened Cape Verde Shearwater *Calonectris (diomedea) edwardsii*, which was previously estimated at c.10,000 pairs. However, systematic land-based counts off Santo Antão, in July 2005, revealed over 6,500 birds in this area alone, perhaps suggesting that overall numbers may be higher than thought. The largest numbers were seen 2.0–2.5 hours before sunset, presumably involving birds returning to their colonies.

Source: *Atlantic Seabirds 7*, pp 121–126



Common Snipe / Bécassine des marais *Gallinago gallinago*  
(Georges Oliosio)

### Common Snipe breeding in the Azores

During a visit to the Azores in late April–early May 2005, seven display areas of Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* and at least 21 pairs were found in the central highlands of Flores, whilst observations on Faial suggested the presence of 2–3 breeding pairs at the swamp in the island's crater. Given these records, the occurrence of the species on the islands of Pico and São Miguel is suspected. Common Snipe is one of the rarest breeding birds in the archipelago.

Source: *Faunistische Abhandlungen 26*, pp 37–62

### Goldcrests on Azores sing differently

Territorial songs in the populations of the three subspecies of Goldcrest *Regulus regulus* endemic to six islands of the Azores (*inermis*, *azoricus* and *sanctaemariae*) are very different from those of their continental relatives. All populations investigated by researchers Martin Päckert and Jochen Martens displayed high intra- and inter-individual acoustic variation. On each island, up to six different song types were found, with a single male singing up to three types. In contrast, all north-western populations of *R. r. regulus* share a single song type. In playback experiments, none of the 18 tested dialect songs of Azorean Goldcrests provoked any notable territorial reaction in German and Czech Goldcrest males. Analysis of the dialects suggests that the westward expansion of the species on the

Azores originated from the western part of São Miguel.

Source: J. Orn. 145, pp 23–30

### Barbary Falcon studied on Tenerife, Canary Islands

In contrast to the closely related Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*, the biology of the Barbary Falcon *F. pelegrinoides* is poorly known. In a study, conducted on Tenerife, in the Canary Islands, in 2004–05, researchers found a total of 26 pairs and a few single territorial females, all of them occupying natural cliffs. Cultivated and urban areas were avoided for nesting, although they were used for hunting.

Productivity was rather low, averaging 1.55 young/pair, but no less than 81% of breeding pairs were successful. No correlations were observed between habitat features and productivity. This is probably due to the stable climate, the availability of suitable cliffs and the absence of potential predators. As many suitable cliffs are still unoccupied, the Barbary Falcon population on Tenerife has potential for further increase.

Source: Ardea 95, pp 213–223

## East Africa

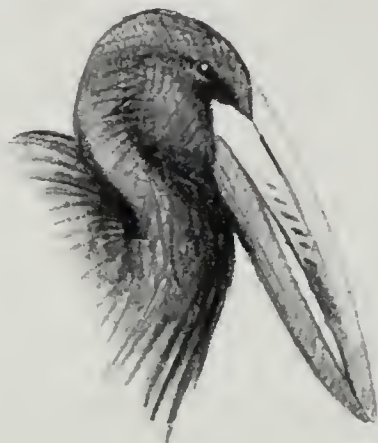
### Threat to Lake Natron's Lesser Flamingos put on hold

The threat to 1,000,000 Lesser Flamingos *Phoeniconaias minor* at their only major breeding site in the world, at Lake Natron, in northern Tanzania, has been put on temporary hold. The plan to build a soda ash extraction and processing plant on the lake's shore has been suspended and the developers have been ordered to produce a more robust environmental impact assessment and consider other sites for soda ash extraction. Although this decision is a victory for conservation, BirdLife International warns that the flamingos are not safe yet.

Source: [www.birdlife.org](http://www.birdlife.org),  
October 2007

### Tana River Delta under threat

The Kenyan government plans to convert 33,000 ha of the Tana River



Open-bill Stork / Bec-ouvert africain  
*Anastomus lamelligerus*  
(Pete Leonard)

Delta, one of the country's most important wetlands, into sugarcane plantations. The delta is particularly important as a feeding and breeding site for thousands of birds. In January 2007, 15,000 waterbirds of 69 species were counted in a single day, including, among others, 1,600 herons, 1,400 Open-billed Storks *Anastomus lamelligerus*, 2,500 Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*, 3,200 terns and 76 African Skimmers *Rynchops flavirostris*. There are also still Elephants *Loxodonta africana*, Lions *Panthera leo*, various antelopes and probably 800+ Hippopotamus *Hippopotamus amphibius*. The local community, represented by the Lower Tana River Delta Conservation Trust, are fighting the plans and are seeking support.

Source: Colin Jackson in litt.  
August 2007

## Southern Africa

### Sugarcane plantation in a Botswana forest reserve?

The proposal to clear Mabira Forest in Uganda for sugarcane was strongly opposed by NatureUganda and others, with the result that the plan was shelved (see *Bull. ABC* 14: 133; *World Birdwatch* 29(4): 4). However, there is now a proposal by South African farmers to grow sugarcane by clearing forest in northern Botswana, as well as a more publicised threat to the Tana River Delta in Kenya (see above).

The proposed development in Botswana would result in the conversion of 10,000 ha of prime teak forest in Chobe District, immediately south of Kasane, to a sugarcane estate. All of the water required will be drawn from the Zambesi River. The South African developers are providing all of the necessary finance, have promised that at least 3,500 jobs will be created, that Botswana will produce all its sugar requirements and export the surplus, and that molasses (an excellent dietary supplement for cattle) will also be produced.

The area is rich in wildlife including many mammals. Birds such as Coqui Francolin *Peliperdix coqui*, African Cuckoo Hawk *Aviceda cuculoides*, Racket-tailed Roller *Coracias spatulatus*, Miombo Rock Thrush *Monticola angolensis*, Broad-tailed Paradise Whydah *Vidua obtusa*, Orange-winged Pytilia *Pytilia afra* and Black-eared Canary *Crithagra mennelli* have their Botswana strongholds there. The Chobe area possesses the highest density of birds in Botswana, and the forests near Kasane represent an important non-breeding ground for River Warblers *Locustella fluviatilis*. The half-degree square at Kasane boasts over 410 species, significantly more than any other similar-sized area in Botswana, even the Okavango Delta.

Kasane is wholly dependent on the wildlife tourist trade. Many of the tourists fly into Kasane and would see this 10,000-ha swathe of sugarcane before landing. It is strange that Botswana is considering this sugar project at exactly the same time as it is planning, with four neighbours, to establish the largest trans-frontier park in the world, in this very area by 2010.

Environmental impact studies will be undertaken and must take into account the effect of cane farming on surrounding areas, including fire and smoke resulting from burnings at harvest, and on tourists to Kasane. The smell of molasses is not particularly appealing, especially to a tourist who has spent a large sum on his or her holiday. Additionally, the roads



will be littered with cane stalks which have fallen from trucks or been discarded by pedestrians. Kasane, as the second-most important tourist destination in the country, will rapidly lose its popularity as *the* wildlife environment to visit. The sad issue is that Botswana does not enjoy a successful tradition of agrarian farming. The countryside is littered with failed attempts of one kind or another. Once this forest has been removed, it can never be re-established.

Source: *Stephanie Tyler and Harold Hester (Chairman of BirdLife Botswana)* in litt. December 2007

### African Penguin continues its downward trend

The first issue of the Avian Demography Unit's *African Penguin News* e-bulletin reveals that the worrying downward trend in the African Penguin *Spheniscus demersus* population is continuing. African Penguins breed in three discrete regions, in Namibia and South Africa's Western and Eastern Capes. In 2007, 21,000 pairs of African Penguins bred in the Western Cape, very close to the total in 2006, but only 6,000 pairs bred in the Eastern Cape, compared to more than 11,000 in 2006, and the global population reached its lowest-ever total, of 31,000 pairs. The main threat to the species is a scarcity of food. African Penguins principally feed on anchovies and sardines, but

both have been scarce for 25 years off Namibia, whilst in the Western Cape these fish have moved out of range of the breeding colonies (penguins cannot travel more than 20 km from their colonies in search of food).

Source: *African Penguin News, November 2007*

### More new birds to the Angolan list

In another recent paper, Michael Mills and Richard Dean (of the Percy FitzPatrick Institute, Cape Town) report on 12 new species (and a further 16 from species splits) which are new to the Angolan bird list. They also provide notes on range extensions of another 50 and some notes on misidentified or doubtful records, as well as some taxonomic issues regarding potential splits of near-endemic forms.

Source: *Ostrich 78, pp 55–63*

### Fires in grasslands: how much are birds affected?

There is surprisingly little research on the effects of fire on the grassland birds of southern Africa. Henk Bouwman and Retha Hoffman (of Northwest University, Potchefstroom, South Africa) have now studied this, following two controlled burns in Barberspan Nature Reserve. Species density and richness increased sharply immediately following a burn, especially of larger species, but both density and richness returned more or less to pre-burn conditions after c.5 months. There were also indications that birds were affected to a degree in surrounding habitats as well. All of this has considerable implications for bird conservation in grasslands subjected to burning.

Source: *Ostrich 78, pp 591–608*

### Swaziland Marabou Storks monitored

Although Marabou Storks *Leptoptilos crumeniferus* appear relatively common at certain southern African sites, breeding colonies are relatively few and the origin of most individuals observed in the region is unknown. The large numbers that congregate in Kruger National Park, South Africa,

must disperse from elsewhere, as just three nests have been reported in the South African 'lowveld'. Hlane Royal National Park in Swaziland is the only site south of the Limpopo River where the species has successfully bred annually for at least the past 40 years. Here the storks nest in short umbrella-thorn *Acacia tortilis* trees, sometimes as low as 5 m above ground. Since 2002, Ara Monadjem has been monitoring this colony, which comprises at least 15 breeding pairs; in 2006, more than 30 pairs bred simultaneously. Eggs are laid between June and September, and clutch size is typically 2–3 eggs. Although all three eggs may hatch, at most only two of the three chicks will eventually fledge—it is suspected that a shortage of food may be a cause of the death of the third chick. That the Swaziland colony is situated in marginal habitat is suggested by the fact that it produces significantly fewer chicks than, e.g., Ugandan colonies. To discover if this colony is a 'sink' population, which relies on individuals from other areas for its survival, chicks have been ringed since 2003 and equipped with patagial tags since 2005. Of the 20 tagged birds, four have since been re-sighted, one of them as far away as Springbok, in Namaqualand, 1,430 km to the west. Observers are asked to report sightings of tagged Marabous to Ara (ara@uniswacc.uniswa.sz).

Sources: *Africa—Birds & Birding 12(3), pp 12–13; Ostrich 76, pp 185–189*

### New project to study ducks

South Africa's Percy FitzPatrick Institute has undertaken a study of ducks and their diseases. By counting, catching, ringing and sampling ducks every two months at five different locations (two in South Africa, and one each in Botswana, Zimbabwe and Mozambique), as well as using satellite telemetry to obtain information on movements, the researchers intend to gather data to predict the time and directions of different duck species' movements, and how these might contribute to the spread of diseases such as avian



African Penguin / Manchot du Cap  
*Spheniscus demersus* (Pete Leonard)

influenza. The work is being supported by USAID and the Global Avian Influenza Network for Surveillance (GAINS); for further information see [www.gains.org](http://www.gains.org)

Source: Africa—Birds & Birding  
12(3), p 22

### Falcon counts in South Africa

In 2006/7, volunteers of the Migrating Kestrel Project (MKP) counted 146,233 roosting migratory falcons across South Africa. These included 88,876 Lesser Kestrels *Falco naumanni*, 56,756 Amur Falcons *F. amurensis* and 601 Red-footed Falcons *F. vespertinus*. The figure for Lesser Kestrel is particularly interesting, as BirdLife International estimated that the South African wintering population probably does not exceed 50,000–60,000 birds. The minimum of 90,000 birds wintering in the region probably is still an under-estimate, considering that the MKP did not count 14 known roosts, which collectively numbered at least 20,000 individuals in 2005/6 (see *Bull. ABC* 14: 15), and many smaller rural roosts were also not included. Despite these relatively high figures, the Lesser Kestrel roost counts for 2006/7 were on average 19% lower than those for the previous season. The fewer than 60,000 Amur Falcons counted provides cause for concern, as the majority of its global population, estimated at 100,000–1,000,000 individuals, is thought to winter in southern Africa. Given the relatively low numbers counted in South Africa, the total population may be closer to the lower figure, unless very large num-

bers of Amur Falcons roost elsewhere in Africa. Whatever the case, current data suggest that this species merits closer monitoring, to check if its conservation status, currently considered as Least Concern, should not be reassessed. For more information about falcons and the MKP, visit [www.kestreling.com](http://www.kestreling.com)

Source: Africa—Birds & Birding  
12(3), p 15

### New information on range and vocalisations of Brazza's Martin

Brazza's Martin *Phedina brazzae* has only previously been known from the Congo Basin. Now Michael Mills and Callan Cohen (of the Percy FitzPatrick Institute in Cape Town) have reported it from the central highlands of Angola (750 km to the north) and Salonga National Park in Congo-Kinshasa (175 km to the south). The species appears to utilise open habitats and may well be fairly tolerant of human-induced habitat changes, thus the authors recommend its global conservation status become Least Concern, rather than Data Deficient as it is listed at present. Their paper also describes the vocalisations of the species, which suggest it is actually more similar to Banded Martin *Riparia cincta* than to its supposed sister species Mascarene Martin *Phedina borbonica*.

Source: Ostrich 78, pp 51–54

### New food source for Barn Swallows

Barn Swallows *Hirundo rustica* are normally thought of eating only aerial insects. However, Les Underhill and Jan Hofmeyr (of the Avian Demography Unit, Cape Town) report that in coastal South Africa they consume quite large quantities of arils of *Acacia cyclops*, an invasive plant species, but that the seeds are avoided. This could be an important means of dispersal for the plant because most birds known to eat the seeds are territorial and do not move far, whereas the local Barn Swallows range over a wide area.

Source: Ibis 149, pp 468–471

### La Mercy airport reprieves roosting swallows

Five million Barn Swallows *Hirundo rustica* that roost in a reedbed in the vicinity of La Mercy airport will benefit from the installation of a bird detection radar system, which will be used to warn pilots when large numbers of birds are in flight. Air traffic controllers will then liaise with the pilots to decide whether to delay the landing procedure, or to approach the runway from an alternative direction. This is one of just several mitigation actions that have been announced in response to the conservation outcry that followed the announcement that the airport was to be dramatically expanded as part of South Africa's plans to prepare for their hosting of the 2010 World Cup football tournament.

Source: World Birdwatch 29(4), p 5

### Internet resources

#### Bull. NOS and Malimbus

The West African Ornithological Society has now placed the full text of the *Bulletin of the Nigerian Ornithologists' Society* (*Bull. NOS*) vols. 11–14 (1975–78), consisting of pdfs of 424 pages, 52 papers and eight issues, on its website, <http://malimbus.free.fr>

NOS was the direct predecessor of WAOS, and *Bull. NOS* of *Malimbus*. Though mostly dealing with birds of Nigeria, *Bull. NOS* contained articles on the birds of several other West African countries. With this latest addition of full text to that of vols. 1–26 of *Malimbus*, there are now 30 years of West African ornithological reporting on the website. Tables of contents, lists of references by country, and species indices, facilitate access.


Source: P. W. P. Browne in litt.  
January 2008



Lesser Kestrel / Faucon crécerellette  
*Falco naumanni* (Mark Anderson)





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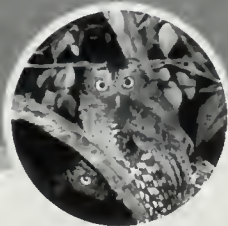
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# On the singing habits of forest honeyguides of the Guineo-Congolian region, with a request for further information

Françoise Dowsett-Lemaire

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Sur le comportement vocal des Indicateurs forestiers de la région guinéo-congolaise, avec une demande pour plus d'informations. Des études en Afrique australe ont montré que les indicateurs chantent à des postes fixes occupés pendant des années. Le comportement vocal des espèces forestières de la région guinéo-congolaise reste mal connu, mais des observations opportunistes obtenues sur une douzaine d'années ont mis en évidence plusieurs traits particuliers: chez les indicateurs qui chantent perchés (genres *Indicator* et *Melignomon*), il y a séparation verticale des espèces; c'est l'Indicateur tacheté *Indicator maculatus* qui chante le plus bas (dans le sous-bois) et l'Indicateur de Willcocks *I. willcocksii* le plus haut (dans la voûte des émergents, avec une préférence pour *Piptadeniastrum africanum*). Les différentes espèces ont des horaires spécifiques de chant: l'Indicateur tacheté est le plus précoce (commençant une heure ou moins après l'aube) et l'Indicateur d'Eisentraut *Melignomon eisentrauti* le plus tardif (commençant environ sept heures après l'aube). Les indicateurs chantent plusieurs heures par jour à un poste fixe, mais la durée peut varier selon les espèces et semble particulièrement courte chez l'Indicateur d'Eisentraut (environ deux heures). Certaines espèces s'arrêtent de chanter 2–3 mois par an (Petit Indicateur *Indicator minor*, Indicateur de Willcocks) ou par périodes de plusieurs semaines (Indicateur à queue-en-lyre *Melichneutes robustus*, qui parade surtout pendant la longue saison sèche). L'Indicateur tacheté chanterait toute l'année; on manque d'informations pour les autres espèces.

La fidélité au site de chant d'une année sur l'autre a été démontrée pour plusieurs espèces (Petit Indicateur, Indicateur de Willcocks, Indicateur tacheté, Indicateur de Zenker *Melignomon zenkeri*). Chez une même espèce des genres *Indicator* et *Melignomon*, les sites réguliers de chant semblent assez dispersés (éloignés d'un kilomètre ou plus). Chez l'Indicateur à queue-en-lyre par contre, il existerait peut-être un système de lek, avec plusieurs individus participant à des parades aériennes dans une zone restreinte. Le bruit particulier produit par cette espèce proviendrait des mouvements des ailes et pas seulement de la queue. On ne sait presque rien du comportement de l'Indicateur pygmée *Prodotiscus insignis* (?parade aérienne), ni des habitudes de chant de l'Indicateur minule *Indicator exilis*. L'Indicateur de Zenker aurait un comportement vocal proche de celui de son congénère l'Indicateur d'Eisentraut (notamment par un horaire de chant en début d'après-midi), mais on a besoin de plus amples informations pour compléter le tableau chez cette espèce et d'autres.

**Summary.** Studies in southern Africa have shown that honeyguides sing at regular sites over many years. The vocal behaviour of forest species of the Guineo-Congolian region remains poorly known, but opportunistic observations over a dozen years have revealed some interesting features: among *Indicator* and *Melignomon* species (which sing perched), there is vertical separation between species, from Spotted Honeyguide *Indicator maculatus* singing low down (in the understorey) to Willcocks's *I. willcocksii* high in emergents (with special preference for *Piptadeniastrum africanum*). Each species has a particular timetable for singing, the earliest being Spotted Honeyguide (starting an hour or less after dawn) and the latest Yellow-footed Honeyguide *Melignomon eisentrauti* (starting some seven hours after dawn). The daily duration of singing varies somewhat between species, the Yellow-footed having apparently the shortest (about two hours). Some species stop singing for 2–3 months each year (Lesser Honeyguide *Indicator minor*, Willcocks's), or for periods of several weeks (Lyre-tailed Honeyguide *Melichneutes robustus*, displaying mostly in the long dry season). Spotted Honeyguide may sing all year; we lack information for other species.



Site fidelity from one year to the next has been observed in several species. Within the same species regular song sites seem rather scattered (at least 1 km distant). The Lyre-tailed Honeyguide, however, may have a lekking system, with several individuals aerial-displaying in a restricted area; the special noise produced by this species appears to result from wing as well as tail movements. Almost nothing is known of the behaviour of Cassin's Honeybird *Prodotiscus insignis* (?aerial display), nor of the singing habits of Least Honeyguide *Indicator exilis*. Zenker's Honeyguide may behave rather like its congener, the Yellow-footed, with a limited singing period in early afternoon, but more information is necessary to complete the picture for this and other species.

The honeyguides (Indicatoridae) are an Old World family of Piciformes, with two species in Asia and 14 or 15 in Africa, depending on taxonomic treatment (Short & Horne 1988, 2001, Dowsett & Forbes-Watson 1993; see below). At least six African species, in the genera *Prodotiscus* and *Indicator*, are known to be brood parasites, and a seventh (Lyre-tailed Honeyguide *Melichneutes robustus*) is strongly suspected to be (Chapin 1939, Friedmann 1955, based on a nestling possibly taken from the nest of a barbet *Gymnobucco* sp.). All species eat insects, whilst those of the genera *Indicator* and *Melichneutes* are avid consumers of beeswax, and also (most *Indicator*) of bees and their larvae (Short & Horne 1988, 2001). The singing and breeding behaviour of four species is reasonably well known, due to field studies in eastern and especially southern Africa: these are Greater Honeyguide *Indicator indicator*, Lesser Honeyguide *I. minor* and Scaly-throated Honeyguide *I. variegatus* (Friedmann 1955), and Green-backed Honeybird *Prodotiscus zambesiae* (Vernon 1987).

The singing habits of the three *Indicator* species mentioned above were studied mainly by Ranger (1955) in South Africa, who was able to draw the following conclusions: males sing at traditional sites over many months each year; these sites are used by an individual, which, when it disappears, can be replaced by another male as soon as the next day; the same sites can be used for at least eight years and possibly up to 26 years in a Scaly-throated Honeyguide 'site', and at least 22 years in the other two species. In the case of Greater Honeyguide, a site consists of a series of trees in a particular area, some as far apart as 85 m; in the other two species, the site is usually more concentrated, especially in the forest-based Scaly-throated Honeyguide, which uses a tight cluster of a few trees. Ranger (1955) also remarked that

Scaly-throated Honeyguide consistently sings in the understorey, whereas the other two use the canopy, and that the former species sings virtually year-round, whereas Lesser and Greater are more seasonal. There are also differences in the timing of singing during the day, Scaly-throated being especially early, starting from dawn, c.3 hours before the other two species. Vernon (1987) in Zimbabwe showed that Green-backed Honeybird sings in aerial displays.

Mating at or near the song site has been observed in the Greater Honeyguide (Friedmann 1955, Ranger 1955), and it is generally assumed that this is the purpose of song sites. Although Short & Horne (1988: 505) write that female Lesser Honeyguides come for breeding to the song site, actual mating was not observed by the authors cited in support (Friedmann 1955, Ranger 1955). However, by trapping in the immediate vicinity of the song site, Ranger and Skead (*in* Friedmann 1955: 189) found that at least six Lesser Honeyguides frequented the same spot. Later Short & Horne (2001: 458) wrote: 'Females . . . are attracted to the song sites, and sometimes may copulate there; most copulations occur away from song perches, usually in low trees or bushes'. Presumably this statement is based on their own unpublished observations.

Very little has been published on the singing habits of honeyguide species inhabiting the Guineo-Congolian rain forests (Friedmann 1955, Short & Horne 1988, 2001). This note presents information I have collected by opportunistic observations in the region, completed by what little has been documented in print, or through correspondence. It is hoped that this paper will encourage other observers to obtain and provide more information on the behaviour of this most intriguing group of birds. Most of my field observations are from northern Congo-Brazzaville and

Cameroon (1994–2001), and West Africa (Sierra Leone, 2007 and Ghana, 2004–05). Dawn was measured as first light when the first diurnal birds start singing (especially Chocolate-backed *Halcyon badia* and Blue-breasted Kingfishers *H. malimbica*). In Odzala National Park in northern Congo-Brazzaville, on the equator, dawn at different seasons varied from 05.30 to 05.50 hrs local time (GMT + 1). Sierra Leone to Ghana are included in the GMT time zone; of course dawn is earlier in Ghana (05.50–06.00 hrs in the forest zone, December–February) than in Sierra Leone (06.40–06.45 hrs in Gola Forest Reserve, January–February). Local time in Nigeria/Cameroon (GMT + 1) is fairly comparable to that in Côte d'Ivoire (GMT), as there is about one hour's difference in real time between the two countries.

**Cassin's Honeybird** *Prodotiscus insignis*. Guineo-Congolian near-endemic, found mostly from Sierra Leone (Short & Horne 2001) east to western Kenya (Zimmerman *et al.* 1996). This is an uncommon species of emergents or canopy in primary forest, or of secondary situations, degraded forest and farmbush with scattered trees (e.g. Brosset & Erard 1986; pers. obs.). The voice is poorly known and there are no tape-recordings (Chappuis 2000). Demey & Fishpool (1994) describe a 'distinctive buzzy *tsrrr-tsrrr* . . . , uttered in flight'. This flight-song has been heard in several parts of its range (R. Demey *in litt.* 2007). By analogy with the other two species of *Prodotiscus* (Brown-backed Honeybird *P. regulus*, and Green-backed Honeybird) of savanna woodlands, one would expect this to form part of an aerial display. That of Green-backed Honeybird is well described by Vernon (1987): birds call in undulating flights 10–20 m above the canopy, giving a disyllabic, harsh *skeee-aa* (first described briefly by Benson & Benson 1948). This call is repeated several times at intervals of *c.* 1 second. Displays persist for *c.* 20 seconds and have been heard in all months, but with a clear peak in the breeding season (August–October in Zimbabwe). The aerial display of Brown-backed Honeybird, with spaced-out notes *tzit* . . . *tzit* . . . *tzit*, is frequently heard in Zambian woodlands (e.g. P. M. Leonard *in* Leonard & Peters 1998, 1999).

**Zenker's Honeyguide** *Melignomon zenkeri*. Guineo-Congolian endemic, of Lower Guinea, from Cameroon (Short & Horne 2001) to western Uganda (Carswell *et al.* 2005). Although R. J. Dowsett and I came across this species several times in northern Congo-Brazzaville, Cameroon (in the south-east: Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2000, and at Mt. Kupe), and in mainland Equatorial Guinea (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 1999), we never heard one singing. The song, a rhythmic series of pure high-pitched whistles, was known to me since 1993 through a tape-recording by T. Gullick, obtained on 25 September 1992 at Mt. Kupe. An earlier recording of a bird singing at the same site was obtained by R. Martins (21 October 1991) and published by Chappuis (2000). T. Gullick (*in litt.* 2007) noted that the bird was singing at mid levels ('20–30 feet up') below the canopy of a large tree, and this was at *c.* 14.00–15.00 hrs. R. Martins (pers. comm. 2007) also tape-recorded the bird in the early afternoon. M. Andrews showed us the song post in March 1997: the site was a large *Aningeria altissima* on the edge of evergreen rain forest which had recently been logged by farmers for planks; the altitude was 1,050 m. On the morning of 1 April we saw a Zenker's Honeyguide in the area, flitting and flycatching in trees around the treefall. It was in moult (tail half-grown) and silent. On further visits to the area, in March–April, September and November 1998, the species was neither heard nor seen and it may be that the disappearance of the tree put an end to this song site. Bowden (2001) wrote that most singing was noted in September–October, but also through to April (in fact to March: C. Bowden *in litt.* 2007). He also mentioned a second song site at Mt. Kupe, without details: this was *c.* 500 m distant, and possibly not a regularly used site (C. Bowden *in litt.* 2007) heard a bird there on 27 February 1992, but did not visit regularly). C. Bowden (*in litt.* 2007) also noted that timing of calling was around mid-day to afternoon, and one calling period lasted *c.* 2 hours. September–October coincides with the second half of the rainy season (the rains ending in November).

**Yellow-footed Honeyguide** *Melignomon eisen-trauti*. Guineo-Congolian endemic, mostly Upper Guinea (Sierra Leone to western Cameroon: Short



& Horne 2001). The song of this species was tape-recorded for the first time by N. Borrow in Côte d'Ivoire on 31 December 2000, and described (with sonograms) by Rainey *et al.* (2003): each note of the series rises in pitch and the tone is somewhat reminiscent of a small raptor. Attracted by playback, the bird sang at a height of usually *c.*30 m, and the time of day was around 14.00 hrs (N. Borrow *in litt.* 2007). On 1 March 2002, R. Demey and L. D. C. Fishpool (*in* Rainey *et al.* 2003) heard the song in another forest in Côte d'Ivoire; it came from just below the canopy, at a height of *c.*15 m, and the time was *c.*13.00 hrs (L. D. C. Fishpool *in litt.* 2007). Both sites in Côte d'Ivoire were in semi-evergreen rain forest. A bird heard by L. D. C. Fishpool in Nigeria (Okomu National Park, 19 November 2004) was singing at *c.*14.30 hrs (L. D. C. Fishpool *in litt.* 2007). Another heard by R. Demey (*in litt.* 2008) in Liberia (North Lorma National Forest, 21 December 2005) sang once at *c.*13.00 hrs, at mid levels in moist evergreen forest.

Assisted by a copy of N. Borrow's tape, I identified the song of this honeyguide in the Atewa Range Forest Reserve, Ghana, on 6–7 February 2005. The forest at Atewa is upland evergreen rain forest (a little over 700 m). The bird was singing in dense vegetation over a stream at mid levels (15–20 m) near a small clearing; in the two days I spent in the area, it sang for a limited period, between 13.30–15.30 hrs (6 February) and 13.20–15.15 hrs (7 February), i.e. starting seven hours and 20/30 minutes after dawn. Song phrases were interrupted by pauses of up to several minutes. When a tape was played *c.*50 m from the tree, the bird went silent for five minutes before singing again. Playback was tried once more, closer to the tree: the bird went silent, located another bird in the same tree and gave chase, both birds flying out of sight. This was at 15.15 hrs and the bird did not sing again that day. On the morning of 7 February a Yellow-footed Honeyguide was seen flycatching in medium-sized trees within 100–200 m of the song post.

During a five-week survey of Gola Forest, an evergreen rain forest in Sierra Leone, in 2007, Yellow-footed Honeyguides were heard singing at two locations. The first was singing in dense vegetation at mid levels (*c.*25 m) in 40-m tall primary forest, on 5 February. It sang from at least 14.00

hrs (not yet by 13.00 hrs, when I first crossed the area) to 15.20 hrs. During that period, it paused twice, for 10 and 17 minutes respectively. The second bird was heard on 21 February, in similar forest, at 14.40 hrs to at least 15.12 hrs. Dawn was at 06.45 hrs, thus a bird singing from 14.00 hrs or slightly before would start about seven hours after dawn, much as in Ghana.

Only the bird in Atewa was heard for the full singing period, which lasted two hours on both days of observation. Overall the species has been heard singing in the months of December–March, in the main or only dry season. The song appears to carry several hundred metres.

**Spotted Honeyguide** *Indicator maculatus*. Guineo-Congolian near-endemic with a wide range, from The Gambia (Short & Horne 2001) east to western Uganda (Carswell *et al.* 2005). Although the species was not tape-recorded prior to the early 1990s (by C. Carter in Ghana, and myself in Congo-Brazzaville), its burring, rising trill was already well described by Williams (*in* Friedmann 1955) and is a characteristic sound of Guineo-Congolian forests; it is virtually identical to that of the extralimital Scaly-throated Honeyguide. It is possibly the commonest honeyguide of any genus in primary forests of the region, and is encountered in any evergreen as well as semi-evergreen rain forest types, primary to old secondary. In The Gambia it occurs in forest but also in degraded wooded savanna (N. Borrow *in litt.* 2007). In Cameroon it ascends into montane forest, to 2,100 m (a bird mist-netted by M. E. O'Kah pers. comm., on Mt. Manenguba), but I have not located a single song post in the Kupe/Bakossi/Manenguba area.

Spotted Honeyguide is very much a species of the understorey, and its presence in mixed-species flocks is usually detected by its 3–4 whistled *foui-foui-foui* calls, somewhat reminiscent of those of a scimitarbill *Phoeniculus* sp., and identical to those of Scaly-throated Honeyguide (pers. obs.). These calls can also be transcribed as 'peeoo-peeoo' (Barlow *et al.* 1997) or 'woe-woe' (Short & Horne 1988). The song is emitted from a shady position in dense understorey, at mid levels (*c.*10–15 m high in 30-m tall forest, but the position of several birds was not located precisely). From Congo-Brazzaville and Cameroon west to Sierra Leone I

have come across 21 different singing birds, and all were heard in the morning, with one exception. The song is audible from a distance of at least 200–300 m. The main song period is overall from one to six hours after dawn, but singing possibly starts even earlier, as I rarely had the opportunity to check or reach a song site by dawn. In Gola one was not yet singing 30 minutes after dawn, but it was when I recrossed the area 40 minutes later; on another day it was singing from at least one hour after dawn. In Ghana (Atewa) one was singing intermittently in the afternoon, between 16.00 and 17.00 hrs (thus more than ten hours after dawn).

How many hours a particular individual sings each day has not been measured accurately, but is at least 3–4 hours, and possibly as many as five hours. In Congo-Brazzaville, one song post at Odzala was occupied for at least one year; another in Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park was relocated on a second visit in May, 13 months after the first. A site in The Gambia was occupied for at least two years (N. Borrow *in litt.* 2007). In northern Congo-Brazzaville and adjacent south-east Cameroon I have heard the song at all seasons, and in all months except June–July (when I was not in the field). Information from West Africa is less complete.

In most forest localities, only one song site was discovered; in Gola, where I found four, the distance between the two nearest was several km. It is surprising that in the mountains of western Cameroon, where this species was frequently recorded (mist-netted, or call-notes heard in mixed flocks), not a single song post could be found in March–April 1998, November–early December 1998, February 1999 and March 2000.

**Lesser (Thick-billed) Honeyguide** *Indicator minor* (the forest form *conirostris*). The form *conirostris*, treated as a separate species by some authors, is a Guineo-Congolian near-endemic which reaches western Kenya, but the precise range limits of this and the peripheral *I. minor* are unclear: the voice of the two forms is indistinguishable (Chappuis 2000) and plumage differences are slight, nominate *conirostris* having darker underparts than other races (Short & Horne 1988, Borrow & Demey 2001). However, the western race *ussheri*

of '*I. conirostris*', which occurs in the Upper Guinea forests east to Ghana, is much paler below and could be a race of *I. minor* (Short & Horne 2001). Lesser Honeyguides *sensu lato* are widespread in the Guineo-Congolian region, inhabiting evergreen and semi-evergreen formations, primary and secondary, lowland and montane. In western Cameroon, singing birds were heard as high as 1,700 m (Mt. Manenguba, February 1999: pers. obs.), and there are records of silent birds up to 2,200 m (Mt. Oku, where a mist-netted bird was attributed to *conirostris*: Stuart 1986). In Liberia it has been heard to 1,550 m on Mt. Nimba (Gatter 1997).

I came across at least 32 different singing individuals, two of which were in study sites visited many times over a total of 13 months (in Odzala, Congo-Brazzaville). Birds sing just below the canopy in the foliage of tall trees, and can be very difficult to locate; one at Odzala sang from at least two or three neighbouring trees. Still at Odzala, the precise time an individual started singing was noted 15 times at different seasons: from 09.00 to 11.45 hrs, but most often between 10.00 and 10.35 hrs ( $n=11$ ), i.e. from three hours and 10 minutes to five hours and 55 minutes after dawn, mean four hours and 40 minutes. The onset of singing could be quite variable at the same song site in the same month: e.g. the time noted on four different days in January 1994 varied from 10.25 to 11.45 hrs. It appeared that the bird tended to start later on an overcast day, and reasonably early (before 11.00 hrs) on a sunny day. The full duration of singing was noted only twice and was three hours (09.00–12.00 hrs, April) and three hours and 45 minutes (11.00–14.45 hrs, January), respectively. Excluded from these counts are two occasions when the bird was hardly singing at all, at the end and at the beginning of the singing season, on 12 September and 19 November. On those dates, it gave just a few songs in the middle of the day (11.30 hrs and 13.00 hrs respectively) and none at all between these dates (on several visits). Another bird checked monthly was singing on 6 September and 13 December but not on 12 October or 12 November.

Observations elsewhere in the Guineo-Congolian region largely concord with those from Odzala, i.e. showing the pattern of a late morning and midday singer: two birds, however, were



singing in mid-afternoon (15.00–16.00 hrs) on the slopes of Mt. Manenguba, at 1,550 and 1,700 m, in February 1999. Possibly in cool environments singing could be displaced slightly later in the day. Of some 28 other individuals, the song was heard between 3–4 hours to 8–9 hours after dawn. One bird in Gola, starting at 09.00 hrs (February 2007), only two hours and 20 minutes after dawn, was exceptionally early; on another day at the same site, a bird was singing at 14.00 hrs but the starting time was not known—assuming it had started as early as 09.00 hrs, the duration of singing would have been at least five hours.

One of the Odzala birds was singing in the same location from January 1994 to March 1995 (with interruptions, as above), and the other site was occupied for at least one year. At Nouabalé-Ndoki one song post located in April 1996 was still occupied 13 months later on a second visit. In Yapo Forest, Côte d'Ivoire, Demey & Fishpool (1994) mention a song site high in the canopy occupied from May to January in three consecutive years.

On seasonality, the Odzala records show a clear interruption for a period of two months, from mid-September to mid-November, in the longer of the two rainy seasons. In Yapo, Demey & Fishpool (1994) noticed an interruption of three months, from February to April (end of dry season, early rains). In Ghana, however, I heard them in all months of field work, from December to April (dry season to early rains) and in July–August (in the rains, Kyabobo). In Sierra Leone, the singing output of two different birds on 27 January and 20 February was so low—only a few phrases in the middle of the day—that it suggested these birds were only just starting again, after a period of vocal rest: by 22–25 February another individual was singing quite vigorously. In Cameroon generally, songs have been heard in all months from November to April (dry season, early rains), but I was not in the field at other seasons, except briefly in September.

Song sites are normally quite scattered: one exception to this was two birds singing within 150 m of each other, in secondary forest on the southern edge of Atewa (Ghana), in February 2005. As this area was visited for only one day, it is unknown whether both of these were 'traditional', well-established sites. In Gola, where three singing

birds were located, the nearest two were c.5 km apart.

**Least Honeyguide** *Indicator exilis*. Guineo-Congolian near-endemic with a wide range throughout the forest region and extending into montane and transition zones, to western Kenya (Zimmerman *et al.* 1996) and north-western Zambia (Benson *et al.* 1971). Its song is almost a high-pitched version of that of Lesser Honeyguide (Chappuis 2000). Very little is known of its singing habits (Friedmann 1955, Short & Horne 1988). In Central and West African forests, it may be the rarest of all *Indicator* species: at Odzala and Nouabalé-Ndoki the few birds seen (one mist-netted) were associated with the edge of swamp forest, but I never located a singing bird. In Lobéké National Park, south-east Cameroon, one was singing in swamp forest at the edge of a large marsh, on 19 December 1997, around 10.00 hrs. In March 2007, N. Borrow (*in litt.* 2007) heard one at Mt. Kupe singing in secondary forest at c.16.00–17.00 hrs. In north-east Gabon, Brosset & Erard (1986) noted a peak in vocal activity during November to February (centred on the hot dry season). In montane forest of the Albertine Rift, I heard it only once in Nyungwe Forest, Rwanda, between late September and early February, on 25 November, when perhaps out of season (Dowsett-Lemaire 1990). Two were singing at 2,100 m in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, Uganda, on 20 February 1990: these were within hearing of each other, but the exact distance was not noted. A bird tape-recorded in Guinea (Foulayah, 3 November 1991) was singing late morning in the canopy (R. Demey *in litt.* 2008).

**Willcocks's Honeyguide** *Indicator willcocksii*. A widespread Guineo-Congolian near-endemic, from Guinea-Bissau (Rodwell 1996) to Uganda (Carswell *et al.* 2005) and Rwanda (Dowsett 1993), extending locally into riparian forests of the Sudanian region, e.g. in southern Chad (Chappuis 2000) and northern Ghana (Mole National Park and Gbele Reserve: pers. obs. 2005). A fairly common species of evergreen and especially semi-evergreen rain forests, primary and secondary, and more locally in drier (in Gbele largely deciduous) riparian forests. The song, a rhythmic series of modulated whistles ending in a

*wit* or *wik* note, is readily identified by this final note (Chappuis 2000). Pallid Honeyguide *I. meliphilus* of eastern Africa has a very similar whistled song, also ending in a *wit* (pers. obs. in Kenya; there are no commercial recordings, as the tape published by Chappuis (2000) from Zimbabwe is in fact of Lesser Honeyguide). These songs sound rather weak for honeyguides, but the position of the songsters (see below) permits them to be heard up to 100–200 m, and probably more at canopy level.

In 1994–2007, I came across 20 different song sites, six of them in Nouabalé-Ndoki, Congo-Brazzaville, where the open canopy of semi-evergreen rain forest seems particularly suitable. A remarkable feature of singing birds is their position: they occupy the tallest trees of the forest, usually emergents of great size, often *c.* 50 m in height. Another, even more remarkable, feature is that they show a preference for certain tree species: of 16 'song trees' located and identified, nine were *Piptadeniastrum africanum*, a Mimosaceae with a broad flat crown and feather-like foliage. All six song sites in Nouabalé-Ndoki were in this tree, and others have been found in Odzala (one) and much further west in Gola, Sierra Leone (two). Another favoured tree is *Ceiba pentandra* (five cases): one in Odzala on the edge of a river, two in lowland Bakossi, Cameroon, in secondary forest, and two in Bia National Park and Atewa, Ghana. Other tree species used include *Albizia* sp. (one, in secondary forest south of Mt. Nlonako, Cameroon), and *Khaya senegalensis* (one, Mole, Ghana). The bird can often be very difficult to see, but sometimes was observed to change perches between song phrases, and also to preen or feed intermittently. *Piptadeniastrum*, *Albizia* and *Ceiba* have in common a broad crown and rather light foliage, permitting good visibility for any bird choosing a position in their crowns; they are also favoured by avian insectivores, attracting at times large mixed-species flocks. *Piptadeniastrum* is widespread in northern Congo and elsewhere, but it is not one of the commonest emergents (pers. obs., see Dowsett-Lemaire 1996 for Odzala), thus choosing a *Piptadeniastrum* so frequently cannot be dictated by chance.

Much like Spotted Honeyguide, this is a morning to midday singer, but it tends to start *c.* 2 hours after dawn: thus a bird in Nouabalé-

Ndoki and another in Gola both started exactly two hours after dawn, and continued singing for several hours until early afternoon. The Congo bird was followed for a full day and sang with short interruptions for seven hours, from 07.30 hrs to 14.30 hrs, with a few phrases again at 16.00 hrs! At 11.00 hrs, it moved to a neighbouring *Piptadeniastrum* and sang there for the rest of the day. That in Gola was heard partially over four days: it stopped singing on two different days by 14.00 and 15.10 hrs (thus seven hours and 15 minutes to eight hours and 25 minutes after dawn). The maximum duration of singing (starting and ending were noted on different days) would have been six hours and 20 minutes. Like the Congo bird, it once moved to a neighbouring *Piptadeniastrum* to sing, in the early afternoon.

All of the other 18 singing birds were encountered in the morning, from 2–3 hours after dawn until noon or early afternoon (up to eight hours and 30 minutes after dawn). One song site in Odzala was still occupied 14 months after I first found it; another in Nouabalé-Ndoki was still used in May 1997, 13 months after my first visit. One song site in Atewa used in February 2005—a *Ceiba* on the slope above the gate (pers. obs.)—was still used in August 2006 (A. Hester *in litt.* 2006).

On the seasonality of singing, data are few: one bird followed intermittently at Odzala from January 1994 to March 1995 was clearly silent in September–October; it was last heard in late August, and started again, briefly, on 22 November, in another tree. It had returned to its regular tree and sang more frequently from December. This is very similar to the period of silence observed by a Lesser Honeyguide in the same forest. Elsewhere, in Cameroon and Ghana, songs have been heard throughout the main dry season (late November to March) and beyond (including April, Cameroon, and August, Ghana). For Liberia, in addition to some of the dry season, Gatter (1997) has heard it in September.

As in other species, song sites appear to be rather scattered. At Nouabalé-Ndoki, the two nearest sites were *c.* 1 km apart, but one of them was a 'new' site (in Bomassa camp, occupied in 1997, not 1996), and it is unknown whether this situation persisted. In lowland Bakossi, two sites



were also *c.* 1 km distant, whereas in Gola, the distance between two sites was *c.* 3 km.

**Lyre-tailed Honeyguide** *Melichneutes robustus*. A Guineo-Congolian endemic, from Sierra Leone (Short & Horne 2001) to western Uganda (Carswell *et al.* 2005). Of limited distribution in West Africa, with definite records only from Sierra Leone to Côte d'Ivoire, but widespread in Liberia (Gatter 1997), it may also reach extreme south-west Ghana (Dowsett *et al.* in prep.). The species can be locally common in Central Africa. It occupies the higher strata of evergreen and semi-evergreen rain forest types, with a predilection for the vicinity of rivers, streams, or forest bordering swamps (Brosset & Erard 1986, Dowsett-Lemaire 1997a; pers. obs. elsewhere in Congo, Cameroon, Sierra Leone, and the observations of R. Demey (*in litt.* 2008) in West Africa). In western Cameroon I have heard its display up to 1,200 m, in the Bakossi and Nlonako Mountains. In Liberia Colston & Curry-Lindahl (1986) reported it up to 1,000 m on the slopes of Mt. Nimba.

This species has a remarkable aerial display, producing a series of 10–30 double nasal sounds, transcribed variously as 'nyêté, nyêté, . . .' (Chapin 1939), 'hein-hein- . . .' (Rougeot 1951), 'heyih heyih . . .' (Borrow & Demey 2001). The bird rises 100–200 m in the air and is extremely difficult to locate when the noise is actually produced, during the descent: the general display was well described by Rougeot (1951) from Gabon. In a later publication (1959), Rougeot specified that the noise seemed to be produced by the movements of both the tail and wings: 'j'ai pu noter aussi l'ouverture saccadée des ailes, chaque fois ramenées au corps, et l'ondulation des rectrices'. On another occasion, he saw that the bird 'entr'ouve les ailes par saccades, la queue aussi', later again 'lors de sa chute . . . , entr'ouvrant convulsivement et simultanément les ailes et les rectrices. A chaque mouvement semble correspondre l'étrange et double vibration.' In summary, each noise seems to be produced by the quick opening and closing of wings and tail. From a recent observation in Gabon by A. S. Riley and J. Rossouw (*in litt.* 2006), it appears that the wings indeed play an important role in the production of the noise: 'it appeared to us that the noise was produced by the wings, not the tail as it held its

wings in an out position before each "call", whereas the tail was seen to splay only at the bottom end of the display long after the noise began'. Short & Horne's (1988, 2001) brief descriptions of the display mention only the role of the tail, thus not giving full justice to Rougeot's observations.

At Odzala, where the species is locally common, displays were heard at all seasons, but with short interruptions, of 1–3 weeks, at any time of year. However, a longer interruption of *c.* 6 weeks was centred in March: in 1994, the last display was heard on 25 February and the first one again on 12 April; in 1995, the last was heard on 24 February and none had been heard again by the time I left, on 7 April. In north-east Gabon, Brosset & Erard (1986) found the species displayed most actively in the cool dry season (May–September), and more sporadically at other times. Rougeot's (1951, 1958) accounts are more detailed, suggesting that maximum activity is achieved in June–October (dry season and start of main rains); in some years it can be silent in late April–May, but noisy in other years (or localities). In 1957 there were no displays from 7 October to 27 November. In Liberia, Gatter (1997) heard them mainly in the dry months of November to April.

At Odzala most displays were performed 1–3 hours after dawn, and rarely in late afternoon, an hour before dusk. In Cameroon the pattern seemed similar, with most displays in the morning, rarely late afternoon. In Sierra Leone, in February 2007, displays were heard regularly over the Mogbai stream from one hour to two hours and 30 minutes after dawn. In cool, misty weather, displays can be given much later, in the middle of the day or early afternoon: thus in June 1989 in the Mayombe, Congo-Brazzaville (in the cold dry season), displays were heard sporadically from noon to 15.00 hrs. In the cool dry season of Gabon, Rougeot (1958) noted most displays at 08.00–11.00 hrs, and sometimes also in the afternoon.

Often displays are heard from different locations in a limited area, i.e. a few hundred metres from each other (as along the Mogbai, a forest stream in Gola), and it is impossible to ascertain how many individuals are involved. In June 1989 in the Mayombe, near Dimonika, they were heard

at different points along 3 km (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 1989). At Odzala, as my boat was moving slowly down the Lékoli River (14 October 1994), I heard displays overhead every *c.* 1 km over 4 km. In this case, it seems that at least four different individuals were involved. Brosset & Erard (1986) make similar comments on the distribution of displaying birds along the Ivindo River of Gabon, with inter-distances of *c.* 1 km; in one area, in July, they found a concentration of 2–5 individuals displaying within 200–300 m of each other. Rougeot (1958) sometimes noted two individuals displaying close to each other. I agree with Brosset & Erard's (1986) suggestion that this system of local concentrations is indicative of lekking behaviour. In Liberia, Gatter (1997) noted 'up to two birds heard several times in one place'. In Gola I found one pocket of displaying birds in one area, along 1–2 km of the Mogbai stream, but none in other, apparently suitable, sections of the forest.

## Discussion

Of the eight forest species considered here, information on Cassin's, Zenker's and Least Honeyguides is scanty, and the discussion deals mainly with the other five. Of the four better-known *Melignomon* and *Indicator* species, some interesting patterns to their singing behaviour are beginning to emerge.

1. There is apparently a vertical separation between species, from Spotted Honeyguide singing in the under- to midstorey and Yellow-footed in the midstorey, to Lesser in the canopy and Willcocks's in emergents. Their respective vertical situation may be to some extent related to the type and volume of noise produced. It is hard to imagine that the tiny voice of Willcocks's could be heard efficiently through a wall of dense understorey vegetation, whereas the penetrating purr of Spotted Honeyguide does persist over at least 200–300 m in such situations. Other factors may be involved, including specific feeding techniques: birds feed on insects between singing bouts, and their respective positions in the forest may be partially conditioned by their feeding niche. There is no doubt that Spotted Honeyguides not only sing but conduct much of their feeding in the understorey, and it is the most frequently mist-netted species overall. At Odzala, I captured altogether 13

Spotted Honeyguides for two Willcocks's and no Lesser, even though my main mist-netting area was adjacent to a song site of Lesser.

The predilection of Willcocks's for certain large tree species is most peculiar, and it would be interesting to establish whether the species' closest relative in eastern Africa, Pallid Honeyguide, possesses such preferences. In November 2006 I located a singing bird in a large Baobab *Adansonia digitata* emerging over coastal thicket in Kenya, its position being very comparable to that of a Willcocks's in a forest emergent. C. Jackson (*in litt.* 2007) knows two song sites of Pallid within and near Arabuko-Sokoke Forest, both in tall trees (one in a eucalypt, and the other in an emergent *Erythrina*).

2. Each species appears to adopt a particular timetable for singing. The earliest to start is Spotted (an hour after dawn, possibly even earlier), followed by Willcocks's, Lesser and Yellow-footed. Although the number of observations of Yellow-footed is still small, it nevertheless includes seven different individuals in five different countries, all showing the pattern of an early-afternoon singer: this is the latest of all species, starting only *c.* 7.5 hours after dawn. Zenker's Honeyguides at Mt. Kupe were also noted as singing in early afternoon. This is important to bear in mind in surveys, as species singing late in the day may be more easily overlooked. Lesser Honeyguides in savanna environments are known to start singing *c.* 3 hours after dawn (Ranger 1955), or slightly earlier (*c.* 2 hours; pers. obs.). It appears that most individuals in forest regions start mainly about four hours after dawn, or even later: possibly this slight shift in time is due to different feeding conditions in a more shaded forest environment. This is suggested by the observation that a Lesser Honeyguide at the same site in Odzala started singing earlier on sunny than on dull days.

Concerning the duration of singing, my observations are based on rather few completely measured singing periods, but it seems that Yellow-footed Honeyguides (*c.* 2 hours) do not sing for as long as Willcocks's (up to seven hours), and Lesser and Spotted may be somewhat intermediate. If further information confirms this tendency, the question arises as to how some species can spend so much time singing, as opposed to feeding, even



if some feeding occurs at the song site. Could this be related to the amount of beeswax consumed, as opposed to the more time-consuming insectivorous activities? So far, and unlike the *Indicator* species, *Melignomon* honeyguides are not proven to raid hives to eat beeswax (Short & Horne 1988, 2001).

3. A few song sites are known to have been occupied for a year or more, by Spotted, Willcock's and Lesser (up to three in the latter). One Zenker's Honeyguide at Mt. Kupe was singing at the same site in 1991, 1992 and 1993 (C. Bowden *in litt.* 2007); and it was still present in 1997. This matches Ranger's (1955) observations on site fidelity of honeyguides in South Africa, and C. Jackson (*in litt.* 2007) wrote that the eucalypt in Arabuko-Sokoke has been occupied by a Pallid Honeyguide for at least nine years (since 1998). There is, however, still a long way to go before we know as much as Ranger did about long-term occupancy and the relative position of different song sites.

4. Inter-site distances are difficult to measure, and in a dense forest environment a singing bird can be easily missed if slightly off-track. The general impression is that song sites appear to be widely scattered. The distances of c.1 km in the case of two Willcock's (in Congo and western Cameroon) and 150 m for two Lesser Honeyguides are the shortest measured between two sites. In the latter this is probably unusual: one of the two could have been a 'satellite' site in the meaning of Ranger (1955), who demonstrated that one of two close sites in Scaly-throated Honeyguide (280 m distant) was not attended regularly and was eventually abandoned. In his Lesser Honeyguides, some 'satellite' sites 500–800 m distant were either abandoned, or instead became the main site after the 'old' one was abandoned.

Almost nothing is known concerning the proportion of the adult population singing birds represent. Catching and ringing as many individuals as possible could help, but of forest species only the Spotted Honeyguide would lend itself to such a study, as the other species are too infrequently mist-netted. In Odzala, only one song post of Spotted Honeyguide was located in a section of

forest where 13 birds were ringed, and the species was also the most frequently observed honeyguide, especially around beehives. In the mountains of western Cameroon, call-notes of Spotted Honeyguides were often heard and some birds were mist-netted, but no song post was located. This is reminiscent of the situation on the Nyika Plateau, Malaŵi/Zambia, at 2,000–2,300 m, where Scaly-throated Honeyguides were occasionally seen or their call-notes heard, and were definitely breeding (with three neighbouring nests of Olive Woodpeckers *Dendropicos griseocephalus* parasitised), but I never found a song post within a radius of several km around my main study area (Dowsett-Lemaire 1983). These fragmentary observations suggest that singing birds probably represent only a very small proportion of the overall population.

5. In Lesser and Willcock's Honeyguides, a 'silent' period of c.2 months was clearly apparent at one study site (Odzala), and these birds also sang much less at the end or at the start of the singing season. An off-season of three months was highlighted in Lesser Honeyguides in Yapo (Demey & Fishpool 1994). This is shorter than the 6–7-month off-season observed in more seasonal South Africa, for Lesser (and Greater) Honeyguides (Ranger 1955). In South Africa this off-season falls outside the breeding season, and one can assume a similar pattern for the Guineo-Congolian region. A silent Zenker's Honeyguide observed at a traditional site at Mt. Kupe in April was moulting. I have too few data on moulting seasons of honeyguides at Odzala (Dowsett-Lemaire 1997b) to comment further.

Possibly seasonality is less marked in Spotted Honeyguide, as in Scaly-throated (Ranger 1955), but in general more information is needed on the question of seasonality for these and other species. That Lesser Honeyguides had stopped singing at Yapo in February–April (Demey & Fishpool 1994), at a time of year when (in 2005; pers. obs.) they were singing in neighbouring Ghana also poses further questions: can the season vary so drastically over a relatively short distance, or over different years?

Lyre-tailed Honeyguides possess a unique aerial display, given with varying intensity at different seasons, with a peak in the long or cool dry season.

Unlike perched honeyguides, they seem to be rather concentrated, in small pockets of a few displaying individuals (Brosset & Erard 1986; pers. obs.). However, more information is needed to confirm this.

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*Le Pouget, 30440 Sumène, France. E-mail: Dowsett@aol.com*

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#### Appendix. Gazetteer of localities cited.

#### Annexe. Coordonnées des localités citées.

Arabuko-Sokoke Forest, Kenya	03°20'S	39°55'E
Atewa Range Forest Reserve, Ghana	06°10'N	00°35'W
Bakossi Mountains, Cameroon	05°00'N	09°40'E
Bia N.P., Ghana	06°35'N	03°05'W
Bwindi Impenetrable N.P., Uganda	01°03'S	29°40'E
Foulayah, Guinea	10°02'N	12°53'W
Gbele Reserve, Ghana	10°30'N	02°10'W
Gola Forest Reserve, Sierra Leone	07°30'N	11°00'W
Mt. Kupe, Cameroon	04°48'N	09°40'E
Kyabobo, Ghana	08°29'N	00°35'W
Lobéké N.P., Cameroon	02°15'N	15°45'E
Mt. Manenguba, Cameroon	05°00'N	09°50'E
Mayombe (Dimonika area), Congo-Brazzaville	04°12'S	12°22'E
Mole N.P., Ghana	09°30'N	01°50'W
Mt. Nimba, Liberia	07°32'N	08°32'W
Mt. Nlonako, Cameroon	04°50'N	10°05'E
North Lorma National Forest, Liberia	08°01'N	09°44'W
Nouabalé-Ndoki N.P., Congo-Brazzaville	02°20'N	16°30'E
Nyungwe Forest, Rwanda	02°30'S	29°15'E
Odzala N.P., Congo-Brazzaville	00°30'N	14°45'E
Okomu National Park, Nigeria	06°25'N	05°30'E
Mt. Oku, Cameroon	06°10'N	10°30'E
Yapo Forest, Côte d'Ivoire	05°42'N	04°06'W

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# New bird records for Botswana and additional information on some rarities

Stephanie J. Tyler<sup>a</sup>, Richard D. Randall<sup>b</sup> and Chris A. Brewster<sup>c</sup>

Nouvelles données sur les oiseaux du Botswana et informations supplémentaires sur certaines espèces occasionnelles. Une mise à jour est présentée des données rassemblées entre 1980 et 1990, publiées en 1994 par Huw Penry dans son *Bird Atlas of Botswana*. Des détails sont fournis sur plus de 30 espèces considérées comme probables pour le pays par Penry et qui par la suite ont été acceptées sur la liste des oiseaux du Botswana. Des informations supplémentaires sont également présentées sur 46 espèces considérées comme extrêmement rares en 1994, dont certaines ont depuis été observées assez régulièrement. Les contradictions entre les informations publiées dans la dernière édition de *Roberts Birds of Southern Africa* (2005) et celles recueillies par le Sous-comité d'Homologation de BirdLife Botswana sont signalées. Les ornithologues visitant le pays sont invités à envoyer leurs observations d'espèces peu communes, ainsi qu'une description des espèces observées moins de dix fois, au sous-comité ou de les mettre sur World Tickbird.

**Summary.** We update information gathered between 1980 and 1990 and published in Huw Penry's 1994 *Bird Atlas of Botswana*, by providing details of over 30 species that Penry considered as likely to occur in the country, which subsequently have been accepted onto the Botswana list. We also present additional information on 46 species considered extreme rarities in 1994, some of which have been recorded quite regularly since. Discrepancies between information published in the latest edition of *Roberts Birds of Southern Africa* (2005) and information held by the Records Subcommittee of BirdLife Botswana are highlighted. A plea is made for visiting bird-watchers to submit records of all scarce species and also descriptions of those rarities recorded fewer than ten times, to the Subcommittee or enter them on World Tickbird.

The diverse habitats in Botswana boast a wide range of bird species, although the country lacks high mountains or a coastline. Some 587 species are currently accepted as occurring in Botswana (at November 2006). Although boasting no endemic species, it does possess the largest single-country populations of Wattled Crane *Bugeranus carunculatus* and Slaty Egret *Egretta vinaceigula*, six colonies of which were found in 2006. Botswana is also one of the best places in Africa to find sought-after birds such as White-backed Night Heron *Gorsachius leuconotus* and Pel's Fishing Owl *Scotopelia peli*, as well as a range of raptors and Kalahari 'specials'. Vulture and eagle populations have fared better in Botswana than in South Africa or Namibia, because few farmers put out poison baits. The large mammal populations in the protected areas also result in an abundance of food for scavengers.

The avifauna of Botswana is relatively well known due to an atlas project in 1980–90 organised by Huw Penry. The aim was to establish the distribution and status of common birds, as well as to establish which species occurred in Botswana.

Penry (1994) subsequently produced the *Bird Atlas of Botswana* with distribution maps based on 30' × 30' squares, and giving the status of 495 species in the country. He also presented two appendices. Appendix A listed 59 rare species seen fewer than ten times and in no more than four squares; unfortunately some records lack supporting details and have thus been discounted (see below). Appendix B listed a further 37 species predicted to occur in Botswana, but for which until 1990 there had been no confirmed sightings.

Since the early 1990s many new species have been reported and some accepted by the Records Subcommittee of BirdLife Botswana (BLB). A remarkable number of the new records have come from the Kasane and Kazungula area, along the Chobe River in north-east Botswana. Since publication of the Atlas, knowledge of status and distribution in general has increased substantially, whilst new species, in some cases new to both Appendices, have been accepted onto the Botswana list. Some data on new and poorly known species and range expansions since Penry (1994) were published in *The Atlas of Southern*



*African Birds* (Harrison *et al.* 1997) or in the bi-annual journal, *Babbler*, of BLB. All accepted records of rarities are listed in the regular reports of the Records Subcommittee in *Babbler*.

This paper details the new species and provides additional information on some rarities, to assist resident and visiting birdwatchers in assessing the importance of their records and to encourage them to submit details to BLB. Visitors, including tour groups, can make a huge contribution by passing their records to BLB. Sadly, for many species that the Records Subcommittee learns about on the 'grapevine', no or insufficient details are submitted, resulting in the rejection of the records. We urge all visitors, especially visiting South Africans, to report their sightings, using World Birds Botswana Tickbird. The list of Category A Rarities is available on BLB's website ([www.birdlifebotswana.org.bw](http://www.birdlifebotswana.org.bw)). A full description is required to validate any sighting of a species on this list. We also welcome data on Category B species. These include Red Data species and those whose distribution or status is poorly understood.

Regular reports on rarities in Botswana have, unfortunately, been overlooked by the editors and authors of the latest edition of *Roberts Birds of Southern Africa* (Hockey *et al.* 2005), thus rarity records (and other information, e.g. the regular presence of African Finfoot *Podica senegalensis* on the Marico River: Tyler & Tyler 1996, Tyler 1998) in Botswana were largely omitted from this important volume.

## Habitats

The habitats of Botswana and its Important Bird Areas (IBAs) were described by Tyler & Bishop (1988). Most of the country lies on the Kalahari sands and is covered in low bush or *Acacia* savanna, but there are open sand dunes and many fossil valleys and pans that only occasionally hold water, as during the exceptionally wet summer of 1999/2000. Some of the semi-deserts of central Botswana are protected by the large Central Kalahari Game Reserve, adjoined by Khutse Game Reserve to the south, whilst large areas of dunes and pans, and the Nossob Valley, lie within the Kgalakgadi Transfrontier Park (KTP) in the south-west. Both areas are IBAs. In the east lie a series of sandstone, granite or gabbro hills and kopjes, comprising the Eastern Hardveld. These hills include Kgale Hill and Modipe Hill near

Gaborone, the hills around Lobatse to the south and Mannyelanong Hill near Otse, an IBA because of its colony of Cape Griffon Vultures *Gyps coprotheres*. Further north are the Shoshong Hills near Mahalapye, the Tswapong Hills near Palapye with small permanent rocky streams and another colony of Cape Vultures, and a series of rocky outcrops around Francistown as far as the Zimbabwe border.

The vast salt pans of the Makgadikgadi system, another IBA, are important for their colonies of Greater *Phoenicopiterus ruber* and Lesser Flamingos *Phoeniconaias minor* and Great White Pelicans *Pelecanus onocrotalus*, as well as breeding Chestnut-banded Plovers *Charadrius pallidus* and, in the austral summer, for many thousands of Palearctic migrant waders. In the north are the permanent and seasonal swamps, rivers, floodplains, pans and lagoons of the Okavango Delta with their large waterbird populations. The delta connects with Lake Ngami to the south-west which fills erratically. In the north-east are the Chobe River and its floodplain, and the Linyanti system. Here there are also important woodlands dominated by Zambezi Teak *Baikiaea plurijuga* and Wild Teak *Pterocarpus angolensis*, with a range of other trees and bushes including *Brachystegia* and *Commiphora*. Some of these lie within Chobe National Park or Chobe and adjacent Forest Reserves but they are not immune from fire damage and from African Elephants *Loxodonta africana*. This north-east corner of Botswana is a meeting point for many different biomes—miombo woodland, the moist forests of the KwaZulu Natal coast extending up the Zambezi Valley and the Kalahari sands. In consequence it is the richest area of Botswana for birds.

In addition to natural wetlands, many of which are ephemeral, there are many man-made reservoirs, mainly built since the 1960s. Amongst the most important for birds are Bokaa Dam north of Gaborone, Mogobane Dam south of the capital, Shashe Dam near Francistown and the relatively new Letsibogo Dam near Selebi Phikwe. New dams continue to be constructed, such as Ntimbale Dam near Francistown. As well as these artificial freshwater habitats, there are extensive sewage ponds associated with major settlements. These have a great attraction for waterbirds, and various rarities have appeared at Phakalane and Tsholofelo sewage ponds near Gaborone, whilst

other sewage ponds, at Maun, Kasane and Francistown, have also produced interesting records. Many sewage ponds are regularly counted, as are several dams and natural wetlands, during the African Waterbird Census in midsummer and midwinter.

Some 17% of Botswana is protected by national parks or game reserves with adjacent areas designated as Wildlife Management Areas. The main threats to birds and other wildlife come from increasing human settlements and encroachment, with resulting deforestation and clearance of *Acacia* for crop production. Clearance of bush though can be beneficial to some open-country species. Domestic livestock, especially cattle, cause extensive over-grazing, whilst veterinary fences, erected to control the spread of diseases, have had devastating effects on the movements of large mammals. Their effect on birds may be localised; they cause, for example, deaths amongst young flamingos in the Makgadikgadi system. Declines in raptor populations due to poisoning, direct persecution or loss of disturbance-free breeding sites are of particular concern. Other threats come from the wild bird trade, the killing of birds for 'muti' (traditional medicine) and from the mass controls of Red-billed Quelea *Quelea quelea* using poison sprays and explosions.

### First accepted records

Species marked with an asterisk were listed in Penry's (1994) Appendix B as likely to occur. Site coordinates and their 15' × 15' squares (or 30' × 30' squares) used in Atlas recording are presented in Appendix 1.

### Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus*\*

First accepted record: one near Kasane on 2 February 1995, seen by RDR (Brewster & Major 1998a). Claims of singles, at Maun on 4 March 1991 and Nxai Pan on 19 February 2001, were not accepted. One at Lake Ngami on 4 December 2005 is currently under consideration.

### Augur Buzzard *Buteo augur*\*

First accepted record: an adult by the Motloutse River, at Talana Farms, on 5 November 2004, seen by N. Beck (Brewster 2007a). An unsubstantiated claim from the Tsodilo Hills (on 6 August 1981) mentioned by Penry (1994).

### Crested Guineafowl *Guttera pucherani*

First accepted record: four at Mowana Lodge, Kasane, on 14 November 2000, seen by M. Muller and RDR (Brewster & Major 2003).

### Buff-spotted Flufftail *Sarothrura elegans*\*

Penry (1994) noted that there was suitable habitat for this flufftail to use on passage, but that no claims had been made. A flufftail, subsequently identified as an adult male Buff-spotted Flufftail, was killed by a domestic cat near Matlapaneng Bridge in Maun in mid-December 1991 (Oake & Herremans 1992). A male was photographed at Sunday Pan, in the Central Kalahari Game Reserve, on 21 April 1995, and was observed over the following three days until found dead on 24 April (Crous & Tebele 1995).

### Striped Crake *Aenigmatolimnas marginalis*\*

First accepted record: one at Xaxaba, in the Okavango Delta, on 13 May 1989 (RDR). Other records prior to 1999/2000 in the Okavango Delta were unsubstantiated. However, the species has been shown (by M. Muller and RDR) to be a widespread summer-breeding migrant in northern Botswana, present in large numbers in some wet years (see Muller 2000). It occurs beside rivers, at seasonal pans and in marshes in the Okavango Delta, Chobe floodplain and at large pans on the border with Zimbabwe, such as Kazuma. One was found at Mmabarwa Pan, eastern Botswana, on 3 and 10 January 1998 (Brewster 2000a) and one at Talana Marsh on 9 April 2000 (Brewster & Major 2001b), with one heard at an ephemeral pan near Mawana Gate, north of Maun (1923A2), on 8 December 2001, by M. Muller and RDR (Brewster & Major 2005), and others reported in the Maun area in March 2006 (M. Muller).

### Greater Sand Plover *Charadrius leschenaultii*

One photographed on the Nata River, close to the Nata Delta at Makgadikgadi Pans, on 12 August 2005 (R. Hearn and SJT). Two at the same site two days later (CAB).

### Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva* / American Golden Plover *P. dominica*

One reported at roadside pans 60 km west of Nata (2025B) on 16 April 1997, by P. Madden (Brewster & Major 1998b).



**Spur-winged Lapwing** *Vanellus spinosus*

One at the edge of the swamp between Kavimba and Katchikau, on the Chobe floodplain (1824B1), on 26 July 1989 (Aspinwall 1989). There are several unsubstantiated claims from the Chobe River, between Ngoma Bridge and Kavimba, but these were not formally submitted.

**Greater Yellowlegs** *Tringa melanoleuca*

First (and only) accepted record: one along the Majale River (2229A1), Mashatu Game Reserve, in the Tuli Block of eastern Botswana, on 17 April 2000, by D. Solomon (Brewster & Major 2002a).

**Red-necked Phalarope** *Phalaropus lobatus*

One on the Chobe River near Kasane on 13 October 1998, seen by V. Hesse (Brewster & Major 2000a).

**Long-tailed Skua** *Stercorarius longicaudus*

An adult photographed at Kasane on 18 May 1993 by RDR (Bishop & Brewster 1997).

**European Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia turtur*

One with three Cape Turtle Doves *S. capicola* near North Gate, Moremi Game Reserve, in the Okavango Delta, on 7 June 2002, reported by T. Wood (Wood 2002, Brewster & Major 2003).

**Rosy-faced Lovebird** *Agapornis roseicollis*\*

First accepted record: five roosting in a Sociable Weaver *Philetairus socius* nest west of Swart Pan (2420A1), in the Nossob Valley in south-west Botswana, seen by CAB (Brewster & Major 2003, Brewster 2004). Prior to this, birds had been observed on the South African side of the Nossob River in KTP. Other records from east and south-east Botswana, such as one on 11 March 1995 in 2226B, have been assumed to be escapes.

**Purple-crested Turaco** *Tauraco porphyreolophus*

First accepted record: one in Kasane Forest Reserve on 17 January 1999, seen by M. & S. Muller. Probably the same bird was seen at Mowana Lodge, by the Chobe River at Kasane, on 22 May 1999, by RDR (Brewster & Major 2000b).

**Bradfield's Swift** *Apus bradfieldi*\*

First accepted record: a flock of 400 in the Molopo Valley, south-west Botswana (2621C2/D1), on 18

April 1998, seen by CAB (Brewster & Major 1999, Brewster 2000b).

**Crowned Hornbill** *Tockus alboterminatus*\*

First accepted record: two photographed at Thebe River safari base, in Kasane, on 13–14 October 2004, by RDR, K. Oake and H. Oake (Randall 2006b). A record from the Kasane area on 30 July 1990 was not accepted. Occurs in the mid Zambezi Valley, leading Penry (1994) to suggest that it might occur in northern Botswana.

**Olive Woodpecker** *Mesopicos griseocephalus*\*

First accepted record: an adult female and a subadult near Mowana Lodge, Kasane, on 15 November 2003, seen by A. Riley (Brewster 2007a).

**Melodious Lark** *Mirafra cheniana*\*

First accepted record: one in the Pitsane area, south-east Botswana, on 23 January 1988 (Hunter 1989b). Other records: three displaying at Ramatlabama, also in south-east Botswana, near the South African border, on 24 December 2000, by A. Hester *et al.* (Brewster & Major 2002a); one at Tlharaseleele, south-east Botswana, on 11 January 2006; and eight at Pitsane on 11 March 2006, by CAB (Brewster 2007b). Other claims have all been disproved.

**Black-eared Sparrow Lark** *Eremopterix australis*\*

Early records were mentioned by Maclean (1970), but eight adult males north of Bokspits (2620D3) on 14 April 1998, by CAB, was the first record since 1964 (Brewster & Major 1998b). The second record involved flocks numbering tens to hundreds in duneveld in southern KTP (2620B and 2620D), in February–March 1999, by P. Funston and E. Hermann (Brewster & Major 2001a).

**Angola Swallow** *Hirundo angolensis*\*

First accepted record: four at the Kwando River (1823A2) on 29 September 2004, by RDR (Brewster 2007a). A claim at Kazungula on 18 December 2004 was rejected. Penry (1994) mentioned a record from the Caprivi and others from the Okavango and Cunene rivers, in south and west Angola, and suggested the species might occur as a vagrant in northern Botswana.

**Mountain (Long-tailed) Wagtail** *Motacilla clara*  
One seen on the Photo-Photo River, near Old Palapye in the Tswapong Hills of eastern Botswana, on 14 May and 3 June 2000, by R. Lovett and G. Brina (Brina 2001, Lovett 2001, Brewster & Major 2002a). This prompted RDR to submit an earlier record, from nearby Moremi Gorge, also in the Tswapong Hills, on 7 December 1997 (Randall 2003a, Brewster & Major 2005). Streams in the Tswapong Hills are permanent, but as yet it is unclear whether the wagtails are visitors from nearby South Africa or comprise a small resident population.

**Woodland Pipit** *Anthus nyassae*

Recorded 35 km west of Mohembo, in north-west Botswana, on 27 December 1998 (Brewster & Major 2000b), at Nogatsaa and the Chobe National Park boundary (1825A1) on 5 January 2002, by CAB (Brewster & Major 2003), and at Ngwahla on 15 April 2003 (Brewster & Major 2005).

**Cape Robin Chat** *Cossypha caffra*\*

A dead bird was found just 100 m from Botswana territory at the Tlokweng to Hkopfonteinhek border post, east of Gaborone, in 1992 (Herremans 1992). The first Botswana record involved one seen in a Gaborone garden on 13 April–8 May 1992 by H. Wall (Wall 1992, Penry 1994). Two other claims from gardens around Gaborone the same year were unsubstantiated. The second and third records were of birds seen at Borotsi, 5 km east of Sefhare, eastern Botswana, in June and August 1992, and in 1994, by CAB (Brewster 1992, Bishop & Brewster 1997).

**Red-capped Robin Chat (Natal Robin)** *Cossypha natalensis*

The only record is of one seen at Kasane on 30 November 1996 by RDR (Bishop & Brewster 1997). In Zambia, not far north of Kasane, the species is common in any thicket.

**Collared Palm Thrush** *Cichladusa arquata*\*

First recorded at Mowana Lodge, by the Chobe River at Kasane, where two, observed in October–December 1994 by RDR, subsequently bred successfully (Bishop 1995) and the species is now a breeding resident there (e.g. Randall

1996b). The second record was from Jedibe Island camp, in the northern Okavango, where one was seen on 26 October 1996 and 19 December 1997 by H. Oake, G. McAllister *et al.* (Brewster & Major 1998a). Also recorded elsewhere, notably in the Linyanti system (1823C/D), from Selinda Spillway on 20 September 2002 and Zibalianja Camp on 21 September 2002, by B. Rode (Brewster & Major 2005), and more recently (B. Rode pers. comm.), as well as in the adjacent Selinda Concession, by C. Roche (Roche 2003, Roche & Nels 2006). One was at Xigera Camp, in the Okavango Delta, in July 2006, where it has been previously reported between June 2002 and August 2004 and again in December 2005 (Luck 2006). It was found in *Hyphaene* palms at Nata, c.300 km south of Kasane, on 18 November 2004, by RDR (Brewster 2006), a major extension of its range away from the northern wetlands.

**European Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*\*

In suggesting that the species could appear in northern Botswana, Penry (1994) referred to a record in northern Namibia. However, he overlooked a specimen from Four Rivers Camp in the Okavango Delta, taken on 9 December 1975, which is the first country record. Seven were caught at the Boteti River, near Chanoga, in late December 1987 to mid-January 1988 (Van den Brink & Loske 1990). Singles were trapped at Serondella, on the Chobe River west of Kasane, in March 1992 (Herremans & Herremans-Tonnoeyr 1992) and at Phakalane Sewage Ponds, Gaborone, on 22 November 1992, 23 November and 28 November 1992, by M. Herremans; and at Seleka Farm, on the Limpopo River, on 7 April 1996, by CAB (Bishop & Brewster 1997). Subsequently, more than 100 were mist-netted at Phakalane Sewage Ponds and several at Shashe Dam, eastern Botswana, by Tyler & Tyler (1997) and Tyler (2001b), demonstrating this Palearctic migrant to be frequent in south-east and eastern Botswana, and in the northern wetlands.

**Basra Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus griseldis*

One trapped at Phakalane Sewage Ponds, near Gaborone, on 28 January 1997, by SJT, L. Tyler and J. M. S. Lewis. It was ringed, weighed and measured, and its wing formula recorded (Tyler *et al.* 1997, Brewster & Major 1998b).



### **African (Dark-capped) Yellow Warbler**

*Chloropeta natalensis*

First (and only) accepted record: one at Phakalane Sewage Ponds, near Gaborone, on 17 July 1995, seen by D. Bishop (Bishop & Brewster 1997). This bird was some distance from the species' range in eastern South Africa and Zimbabwe.

### **Cloud Cisticola** *Cisticola textrix*

First accepted record: one heard singing at Tlharaselele, in the Pitsane grasslands of south-easternmost Botswana, on 11 January 2006, by CAB. Three singing in 2525B3 near Pitsane on 11 March 2006 (Brewster 2007b).

### **Spotted Creeper** *Salpornis spilonotus*

First accepted record: one seen at Kasane on 25 June 1994, by RDR (Randall 1994, Bishop & Brewster 1997).

### **White-naped Raven** *Corvus albicollis*\*

First accepted record: one being mobbed by Pied Crows *C. albus* in Francistown in September 1999, reported by H. Williamson (Brewster 2007a). A 1993 record from 2227D was not substantiated, but the species was considered by Penry (1994) as likely to occur in eastern Botswana, close to the hills of south-west Zimbabwe.

### **Northern Grey-headed Sparrow** *Passer griseus*

First accepted record: six at Kazungula on 14 October 2004, photographed by RDR and K. Oake (Randall 2006a, Brewster 2007a).

### **Pied Mannikin** *Spermestes fringilloides*

First accepted record: three adults near Kabulabula lagoon in the Chobe floodplain west of Kasane, on 1 March 1994, seen by M. Herremans and D. Herremans-Tonnoeyr (Bishop 1995).

### **Black-headed Canary** *Alario alario*\*

First accepted record: a flock at Kweyane in 1982–83, seen by R. White (Hunter 1990).

### **Rare species**

These species were included in Penry's (1994) Appendix A. Totals in parentheses after each species reflect the number of accepted records.

### **Garganey** *Anas querquedula* (4)

Four records mentioned by Penry (1994), two of which have been accepted: one at Lobatse, south-east Botswana (undated: Smithers 1964) and two at Jwaneng on 29 November 1981, by H. Penry (Bushell & Bushell 1988, Penry 1994). Two more records have been accepted: one on the Boteti River, between Samedupi and Chanoga (2023B1), on 8 January 2003, seen by SJT, J. O. Stratford and R. Hawker (Tyler 2003, Brewster & Major 2005) and a pair on the Khwai River on 25 March 2004 (Cameron 2005, Brewster 2006). Two claims from Gaborone, in February 1975 and February 1985 (Penry 1994), lack supporting evidence and have been excluded. There are unconfirmed reports from north of the Khwai River in 2001, Lake Ngami in early 2005 and 2006, and Poacher's Pan, Savuti, Chobe National Park, in 1996 (G. Reed pers. comm.).

### **European Honey Buzzard** *Pernis apivorus* (12)

Five records mentioned by Penry (1994) but without supporting details. First accepted record: one in Molepolole River gorge on 3 November 1991, by M. Herremans; the same observer saw one at the Kolobeng River (2425D) on 14 November 1991 and another in the Tswapong Hills on 13 February 1992 (Herremans *et al.* 1993). Subsequent records include: singles at Kasane on 5 March 1989, by M. Rahder, and on 8 November 1993, by N. Hunter (Bishop 1995); south of Francistown (2127A) on 26 January 1994 by R. Bijlsma; at Shakawe on 1 March 1998, by D. Pritchard (Brewster & Major 1998b); and at Sukses, on the Limpopo, on 10 February 1996, by CAB (Bishop & Brewster 1997). In the last decade birds have also been reported near Kasane, on 4 March 2001, by F. Peacock (Brewster & Major 2002a); Sefophe, eastern Botswana, on 17 February 2002 (Brewster & Major 2003a); an adult in riverine woodland by the Limpopo at Winteroord on 9 March 2003 (Brewster & Major 2005); and another in the Kopong Hills near Gaborone on 5 March 2006 (CAB). Records from Maun (Hawker 2003, Randall 2003b) have yet to be accepted.

### **Egyptian Vulture** *Neophron percnopterus* (4)

Two substantiated records from northern Botswana, in December 1976 and January 1990 (cf. Hunter 1992) given by Penry (1994). Also

accepted: one in Khutse Game Reserve on 14 May 1994, reported by S. Major (Bishop & Brewster 1997), and one at Shashe, in eastern Botswana, on 22 March 1998, by M. Toland (Brewster & Major 1998b). Several more recent records are currently being considered.

#### **Black Harrier** *Circus maurus* (5)

Five old records from south-west Botswana listed by Penry (1994), amongst them two from the 1980s (singles in 1985 and in 1989), of which only one was substantiated. Recent accepted records are all from the environs of KTP, in south-west Botswana, as follows: an adult at Polentswa Pan on 31 March 1999, by SJT *et al.* (Brewster & Major 2000a); at least ten sightings of single adults in the Nossob Valley and dunes in KTP in 1999, by P. Funston and E. Forsyth (Brewster & Major 2001a); one in the Nossob Valley north of Kij Kij waterhole (2620B2) on 24 March 2001 (Brewster & Major 2002b); and one 60 km east of Nossob Camp on 17 April 2002 (Brewster & Major 2003a).

#### **Western Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus* (20)

Three records listed by Penry (1994), including one substantiated, at Kgoro Pan on 23 January 1988, by N. Hunter and H. Penry. The others involved singles in 1725C on 2 December 1988, seen by N. Hunter, and at Lake Ngami on 19 November 1989, by W. Tarboton and H. Penry. Herremans *et al.* (1993b) listed five accepted records, including that in January 1988; the others being two seen at Nata Delta on 26 December 1988 by J. Auburn; an immature at Lake Ngami on 17 December 1989 by T. Volpers, and an adult female and subadult male seen, respectively at Nata River on 10 February 1992 and Nogatsaa in Chobe National Park on 6 March 1992 by M. Herremans and D. Herremans-Tonnoeyr. Additional records are as follows: one at Tsholofelo sewage ponds, Gaborone, on 8 December 1990, by S. E. Petersen; three different birds at Lerela, eastern Botswana, on 3 February 1991, 9 and 30 March 1991, by CAB; an immature at Nata Delta on 7 April 1991, by R. M. Borello & W. D. Borello (Hunter 1992); singles on the Chobe floodplain in October and December 1992, by RDR, and at Nata Sanctuary in December 1996 and January 1997, by D. Hoddinott; two at Selebi Phikwe in November 1998–February 1999, by D.

Philip; one at Talana on 17 January 1999, by CAB; one at Gaborone Dam on 17 March 1999, by I. Draycott; one at Phakalane Sewage Ponds on 27 December 2001, by D. Pritchard; and two at Nata Delta in January 2007 (RDR, M. Muller *et al.*).

#### **Corn Crake** *Crex crex* (8)

Four specimens from north and east Botswana detailed by Smithers (1964) and two records, from 1980 and 1982, given by Penry (1994) but without supporting details. The first accepted sight records were singles flushed from damp grassland near Qaaxhwa Lediba on 12 December 1996, by SJT (Brewster & Major 1998a) and at Mombo in the Okavango Delta, also on 12 December 1996, by I. Davidson (Brewster & Major 1998b). Subsequently, singles were recorded at Talana Farm, eastern Botswana, on 16 January 1999 (Brewster & Major 1999), the Kwando floodplain on 16 December 1998 (Brewster & Major 2000a), the Thamalakane River, in Maun, on 28 January 2001 (Brewster & Major 2002), whilst two were seen and heard at Qaaxhwa Lediba, near the site of the first record, on 27 January 2003 (Brewster & Major 2005). One was photographed in Maun in December 2005, by G. Reed and U. Franke (Fig. 1), and another sighted at Lake Ngami by R. Hearn (not accepted), whilst others were seen on 25 January 2005 at Ngotwane, south of Gaborone, by CAB (Brewster 2007a). Beesley & Irving (1976) recorded Corn Crakes as frequent in the Gaborone area in December–February, but the Ngotwane birds are the first recent records for the area.

#### **Ludwig's Bustard** *Neotis ludwigii* (6)

Four unsubstantiated records from the Nossob Valley, south-west Botswana, mentioned by Penry (1994). The first accepted records are one (consisting of three sightings) in the Nossob Valley in 1990, reported by J. J. Herhalt (Hunter 1990) and another of six birds at Polentswa Pan on the Botswana side of the valley, in KTP, on 14 April 1998, seen by CAB (Brewster & Major 2000a). Subsequent records are also all from the Nossob Valley or duneland in KTP: five in the valley on 13 December 2000, by E. Herrmann; singles near Rooiputs (2620B3) on 17 January 2001 (Brewster & Major 2002b) and in the same square, north of Two Rivers, on 23 February 2001 (E. Herrmann),



with a pair on the Botswana side of the Nossob Valley on 24 December 2002, by SJT and J. O. Stratford (Brewster & Major 2005).

**Rock Pratincole** *Glareola nuchalis* (3 away from Kasane Rapids)

Regularly reported at Kasane Rapids, on the Chobe River, where up to ten pairs breed, with occasional records elsewhere as follows. One on the Okavango River (1821B) on 4 October 1990, seen by J. L. Fenn (Hunter 1992); one at Xaxaba, Okavango Delta (1923C) on 3 October 1984, by M. Sanders (Hunter 1989); and, most extraordinarily, one photographed at Jwaneng Reticulation Ponds on 10 October 1992, by M. Soroczynski (Herremans *et al.* 1993).

**Pectoral Sandpiper** *Calidris melanotos* (8)

Three pre-1978 records listed by Penry (1994). Subsequent records, all of singles, are from Bokaa Dam on 29 December 1991 (Bishop 1993); Samedupi, on the Boteti River, on 27 December 1994, by M. Muller (Bishop & Brewster 1997); Mogobane Dam on 21 January 1999 (Tyler & Hester 1999), at which location Wilson (1981) had reported the species in December 1978 (included in Penry 1994); Lechwe Flats, in the Linyanti, on 7 November 2003, photographed by B. Roche; Bokaa Dam on 31 October 2004, by CAB (Brewster 2006). One on 13 March 2005 in the south-west Okavango Delta was not accepted.

**Great Snipe** *Gallinago media* (8)

One collected at Kwikamba, Chobe floodplain, on 20 March 1967 is retained in the Bulawayo Museum. Four other records from northern Botswana in 1985–89 mentioned by Penry (1994), only one of them (Kwando floodplain, 27 March 1985) substantiated. Subsequent records are as follows: one at Kasane Rapids on 26 November 1992 (Bishop & Brewster 1997); an immature photographed on the Thamalakane River in Maun on 11 January 1994 (Bishop 1995); one on the Boteti River (2023B1) on 10 January 1995; one at Shashe Dam on 22 and 24 September 1996 (Bishop & Brewster 1997); one also at Shashe Dam on 23 September–14 October 1997 (Lovett & Lovett 1998, Brewster & Major 1998b); and one at Zibalianja Camp, Linyanti, on 2 May 1997 (Brewster & Major 1998a).

**Bar-tailed Godwit** *Limosa lapponica* (5)

Penry (1994) mentioned two older records (at Lake Ngami in January and October 1969, and an accepted record at Mogobane Dam on 9 October 1978; see Wilson 1981), as well as five records from Atlas field work in the 1980s. Only two of these appear to be substantiated: one seen on 22 October 1988 and again in November 1988 in the Gaborone area (Bushell & Bushell 1989). The third accepted record involved four birds at Sua Pan in December 1996, by D. Hoddinott (Brewster & Major 1998b), followed by two at Shashe Dam on 9–10 October 1999, by CAB and R. & V. Lovett (Brewster & Major 2001a), and one at Lake Ngami on 1 October 2001, by CAB (Brewster & Major 2003).

**Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus* (15)

Nine substantiated records from Gaborone and Orapa in the 1980s given by Penry (1994); we count these as six, as some refer to the same bird on different dates. Subsequent records include: one at Tsholofelo sewage ponds, near Gaborone, on 20 October 1990, reported by D. Bishop *et al.* (Hunter 1992); one at Nata Sanctuary and another at Bokaa Dam on 3 and 7 November 1998 (SJT *et al.*), with the Bokaa Dam bird still present on 28 November; one at Nokaneng on 15 September 2001 (SJT); one at Lake Ngami on 1 October 2001 (CAB); two at Bokaa Dam on 11 August 2003 (SJT); one also there on 10 and 31 October 2004 (CAB); one at Lake Ngami on 14 September 2004 (R. Hawker); and one also there on 4 September 2005 (M. Muller).

**Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus* (4)

First accepted record: one, seen 3–4 km west of Serondella on the Chobe waterfront, on 1 November 1987, by R. Coomber (1724D: Penry 1994). Subsequent records: one seen 2 km north-west of Xugana airstrip in the Okavango Delta on 22 January 1992 by A. Galsworthy (Herremans *et al.* 1993b); one at Gaborone Dam on 19 January 1991 by M. Herremans; and one at Magwexana Pools, Moremi Game Reserve, on 24 November 1993 by RDR (Bishop 1995). A claim on 12 December 1995 in 1923D was not accepted (Bishop & Brewster 1997) and a recent record on the Limpopo River was also rejected.

**Terek Sandpiper** *Xenus cinereus* (9)

Four records mentioned by Penry (1994), all from northern Botswana, of which only two were substantiated (one in 1725C in September 1988 and one at Lake Ngami on 10 October 1970). Singles were recorded near Gaborone on 31 March 1989 by A. Kerton, at Nata Delta on 25 July 1989 by T. Liversedge (Hunter 1989), and at Gaborone Dam on 28 December 1990 by WDB (Hunter 1992). More recently, singles were seen at Kasane sewage ponds on 2 March 1998 by RDR (Brewster & Major 1999), in Maun on 22 January 2001 by M. Muller (Muller 2001, Brewster & Major 2003), at Bokaa Dam on 14 November–5 December 2004 by CAB (Brewster 2006), and at Shashe Dam on 24 May 2005 (P. D'Arcy).

**Red (Grey) Phalarope** *Phalaropus fulicarius* (4)

First accepted record: one collected at a pan west of Kanye in March 1960 (Smithers 1964). Subsequent records: one at Tsholofelo sewage ponds, Gaborone, on 12–13 October 1991 (D. Bishop *et al.*); one at Jwaneng Slimes Dam on 10 December 1991, by M. Soroczynski (Herremans *et al.* 1993b); and one photographed at Nxai Pan on 21 January 2006, by N. Polenakis (Fig. 2).

**Black-headed Gull** *Larus ridibundus* (1)

The only accepted record, despite other claims, is one from the Chobe River on 10 April 1988 (Penry (1994; also mentioned in Hockey *et al.* 2005).

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** *Larus fuscus* (11)

Following the nine records, at Lake Ngami, Nata Delta and Jwaneng, mentioned by Penry (1994), one of which was substantiated (a bird at Lake Ngami on 27 September 1970 seen by A. J. Tree), it has been reported in the Nata Delta on several occasions and, more recently, at Lake Ngami, where seen sporadically in 1970–89. A record at Jwaneng on 13 November 1991, by M. Soroczynski, was accepted as either *L. fuscus* or Kelp Gull *L. dominicanus*, though the latter seems most unlikely in Botswana. Records include the following: one at Kgale Siding near Gaborone on 27 November 1994 (Bishop & Brewster 1997); one at Nata Delta in August 1997 (Brewster & Major 1998b); an immature on the Chobe River at Kasane on 3 November 1998 and an adult on Sedudu Island, in the same square, on 6 December

1998 (Brewster & Major 1999); one at Nata Delta on 18 January 2000 and nine on 27 January 2002 (Brewster & Major 2003); an immature at Nata Delta on 4 January 2005 (Brewster 2006) and two immatures there on 23 July 2005 (R. Coomber); and four at Lake Ngami on 29 August 2006 (CAB). Records of an adult photographed at Zibadianja Lagoon, Linyanti, on 10 December 2006 (B. Rode; Fig. 4) and of two at Lake Ngami on 10 January 2007 (D. Rollinson) are still under consideration.

**Schalow's Turaco** (Lourie) *Tauraco schalowi* (2)

First accepted record: one at Savuti, Chobe National Park, on 21 December 1988 (B. & D. Bushell *in* Hunter 1989; mentioned in Penry 1994). Only one record since: one in Kasane Forest Reserve on 17 January 1999, by M. Muller (Brewster & Major 2000a).

**Ross's Turaco** (Lourie) *Musophaga rossae* (1)

The only record is a specimen from near Ikoga, in the north-west Okavango Delta, on 7 October 1974 (Penry 1994). I. Bampton *in* Irwin (1984) claims to have heard the species at Ikoga and believed there to be a population there, but this is considered unlikely. A sight record from Moremi Game Reserve, on 14 August 1990, was not accepted and another, near Ikoga in winter 2003, by B. Pryce, lacks a description. A record at Kasane on 28 October 2000 is pending.

**Thick-billed Cuckoo** *Pachycoccyx audeberti* (11)

Three records mentioned by Penry (1994): one from the Kwai River (1923B) on 16 July 1969 (specimen) and two from 2229A on 23 May 1986 and 15 March 1987 (see Bushell & Bushell 1988). Subsequent records: two in the Linyanti on 3 October 1991, by A. Reed (Herremans *et al.* 1993b); one at Shakawe on 6 October 1993 (N. D. Hunter); one at Santandibe on 24 October 1995, by M. Herremans (Bishop & Brewster 1997); one at King's Pool Camp in the Linyanti on 6 December 1996 (B. Rode); two at Mombo (1922B) on 7 December 1996, by H. Oake (Brewster & Major 1998a); one at Shakawe on 18 September 1997, by D. Pritchard (Brewster & Major 1998b); one at Xigera Camp on 21 November 1998 (AWH *et al.* *in* Brewster & Major 1999) and 11 November 2001 (K. Newman *in* Brewster 2006).



**Emerald Cuckoo** *Chrysococcyx cupreus* (regularly reported in Kasane/Kazungula area)

Five records in the Kasane area mentioned by Penry (1994). One reported at Maun on 4 January and 11 January 1994 (probably the same bird) by M. Muller and CAB (Bishop & Brewster 1997). Otherwise all records are from the Kasane/Kazungula areas and the Zimbabwe border south of Kazungula, including singles on 3 January 1997 (D. Hoddinott and E. Forsyth) and in the Leshuma Valley in December 1999 (SJT).

**African Grass Owl** *Tyto capensis* (4)

Two records accepted by Penry (1994): a specimen taken at the Ngotwane grasslands, Gaborone, in 1971, by K. Ullberg, and a sight record from the same site in March or April 1978, by R. White (Hunter 1989a). Subsequent records: two at Gaborone Dam on 27 July 1998 (Borello & Borello 1998) and one 12 km from Francistown on 11 October 2000, by N. Bousfield (Brewster & Major 2002a).

**Böhm's Spinetail** *Neafrapus boehmi* (3)

Five records in 1985–89 given by Penry (1994), but supporting details were available for only one, near Shakawe (1821B) on 24 March 1985, by N. D. Hunter and D. Aldiss. The second and third accepted records were of one with other swifts at Daoga, on the Boteti River south-east of Maun, on 10 January 1995, by R. Bjilmsa and B. van den Brink (Brewster & Major 1998b) and one 30 km east of Beersha, northern Botswana, on 27 August 2000, by CAB (Brewster & Major 2001b).

**Madagascar Bee-eater** *Merops superciliosus* (3)

Two records, from the Kasane area in March 1974 (unsubstantiated and no details available) and in January 1984, mentioned by Penry (1994). Flocks were seen in the same area on 22 November 1992, by RDR, and on 28 December 1992, by M. S. Caulton (Bishop 1995).

**Green-backed Honeybird (Slender-billed Honeyguide)** *Prodotiscus zambesiae* (6)

Records by CAB during the 1980s from 1821C on 22 June 1986 (Bishop 1995) and 1821D on 24 October 1987 (Bushell 1988), were included in Penry (1994), who also mentions a third record, in 1825A on 2 November 1986, but as this lacks details it is not accepted here. Singles were subse-

quently recorded in the Tswapong Hills on 18 August 1990 (Hunter 1992), in the Linyanti on 10 March 1992 (Bishop & Brewster 1997), south of Serondella on 26 November 1992 (Herremans *et al.* 1993b), and at Shakawe Lodge, by the Okavango River, on 4 August 2004 (SJT in Brewster 2006).

**Stark's Lark** *Spizocorys starki* (20+)

Eight pre-1962 records listed by Smithers (1964), followed by a record from Tsabong (2622A) in December 1987 (Hunter 1991, Penry 1994) and two at Kgoro Pan on 11 November 1991 (Herremans *et al.* 1993b). The next was south of Makunda (2220C) on 16 August 1996 (Bishop & Brewster 1997). On 11 April 1998 CAB observed c.30 at Khiding Pan, Mabuasehube Game Reserve, 100 at Macatso Pan (2521B) and, on 13 April 1998, c.50 north of Bokspits and c.300 in the Molopo Valley (2621C). These were followed by five at a pan south of Lake Ngami (2022C) on 2 July 1998 (AWH in Brewster & Major 1999), two in the Molopo Valley (2621D) and two in the Nossob Valley (2620B) on 4 December 1998 (SJT in Brewster & Major 1999), five sightings of 1–2 birds in southern KTP (2620B/D) in late 1998/early 1999, (P. Funston and E. Forsyth), and a large influx into the Bobirwa area, eastern Botswana, in June–July 2003, with some remaining until December 2003. Three were also seen at Kazuma Pan, near Pandamatenga in north-east Botswana (Brewster 2003). These records were all well outside the usual range but were not mentioned by Hockey *et al.* (2005).

**Black Saw-wing** *Psalidoprocne (pristoptera) holomelas* (2)

A record of two at Shakawe, in the northern Okavango Delta, on 27 August 1987 (erroneously given in Penry (1994) as 30 August), by K. Newman was reviewed by the Records Subcommittee because of the availability of new data concerning the ranges of *P. (p.) holomelas* and of the western race, *reichenowi*, of Eastern Saw-wing *P. orientalis*. The latter occurs in western Zambia and could potentially do so in northern Botswana. The description of the Shakawe birds does not distinguish between the species and is therefore currently treated as an unidentified *Psalidoprocne*, and Black Saw-wing was removed from the Botswana list (Brewster & Major 2002a).

However, one at the confluence of the Motloutse and Limpopo on 1 July 2000 (CAB) subsequently became the first accepted record (Brewster & Major 2002b), with another on 3 October 2002 (J. van Zyl) at Dopotta in the Tuli Block of eastern Botswana (Brewster & Major 2005). Not all authorities agree with the recognition of two species of *Psalidoprocne* and Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett (2006) noted that such an arrangement is not supported by molecular evidence (see Sheldon *et al.* 2005). If only one species is recognised, then the 1987 record would become the first accepted record.

#### **Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea* (3)

One at Puku Flats by the Chobe River in December 1984 accepted by Penry (1994) as the first record, but subsequently reassessed and considered unacceptable (Herremans *et al.* 1993b). Three accepted records: one seen at Lemone (Limone) Pan, south-west of Palapye, on 22 January 1989, by A. Kvist (Hunter 1992); one at Borotsi on 13 November 1993, by CAB and D. Bishop (Bishop 1995); and one photographed at Nata Lodge on 14 May 1996, by N. Ashby (Bishop & Brewster 1997).

#### **Mountain Pipit** *Anthus hoeschi* (3)

Four specimens were collected at Francistown on 14–22 October 1965 (Penry 1994). Four at Manamodi Pan, KTP, on 28–29 April 2001 by CAB constituted the first accepted sight record for Botswana, and were followed by c.6 at Masetleng Pan on 30 April 2001 (Brewster 2007a). Appears to migrate through north-east Botswana, from its wintering grounds to the north, to breeding grounds in the Drakensberg.

#### **Whinchat** *Saxicola rubetra* (2)

A single accepted record mentioned by Penry (1994): one seen at Xaxaba on the Boro River, in the Okavango Delta, on 27 March 1987, by RDR. The only accepted record since is of one photographed at Kasane Airport on 17 February 2005 (A. Cope *in* Brewster 2006).

#### **Mountain (Chat) Wheatear** *Oenanthe monticola* (5)

Since the five records mentioned by Penry (1994) from south-west Botswana, three of them substantiated, there have been just two more: a female in

the Molopo Valley 80 km west of Bokspits (E. Herreman *in* Brewster & Major 2002a), and two in the Nossob Valley at Struizendam, north of Bokspits, on 27 August 2001 (SJT & L. Tyler *in* Brewster & Major 2003).

#### **River Warbler** *Locustella fluviatilis* (10)

The three records presented by Penry (1994) were of birds seen and heard at the Tati River, Francistown, in March–April 1986 (counted as two records by Penry but as one by us) and in March 1989. Subsequent records are as follows: one at the Ngotwane River south of Gaborone on 15 March 1993 (Abernethy & Herremans 1994); 21 in Kasane Forest Reserve on 4–6 March 1992 (Bishop & Brewster 1997); one trapped at Seleka Farm in the Tuli Block on 7 April 1996 (Bishop & Brewster 1997); one heard at Nata Lodge on 1–2 January 1997 (Brewster & Major 1998b); one seen in Kasane Forest Reserve on 27 December 1998 and another at a different location there on 3 January 1998 (Brewster & Major 1999); two at the Thamalakane River in Maun on 3–4 April 2000 (Brewster & Major 2005); and one ringed at Francistown on 28 January 2006 (N. Bousfield).

#### **Croaking Cisticola** *Cisticola natalensis* (3)

Five records mentioned by Penry (1994): one from Mpandamatenga in north-east Botswana (Smithers 1964), and four from Mapporo Pan in July–August and in October 1988 (1824B/1825A) by R. Crous (considered by us to represent a single record). The species was found to be rather plentiful in grasslands east of Nogatsaa (Nochatsaa), in Chobe National Park, on 6–7 March 1992 (Herremans & Herremans 1992).

#### **Pale-crowned Cisticola** *Cisticola cinnamomeus* (2)

Two in grassland at Xugana, in the Okavango Delta, on 5 January 2005, by RDR, was the first accepted sight record (Brewster 2007a). There is a specimen, collected in 1975 at the same locality, and two unsubstantiated sight and aural records, in April 1989 from 1823C/D (Penry 1994).

#### **Rufous-bellied Tit** *Parus rufiventris* (2)

The first record, noted in Penry (1994), was of singles seen 8 km and 12 km west of Shakawe (1821B) on 20 July 1986, by CAB (Herremans *et al.* 1993b). The same observer reported one 30 km west of Mohembo (1821A), close to the Namibia



border, on 29 December 1998 (Brewster & Major 1999).

**Purple-banded Sunbird** *Cinnyris bifasciatus*

Reported frequently from the Kasane/Kazungula area of north-east Botswana, but only one accepted record elsewhere, at the Okavango River near Nguma Lediba (1822C2), on 26 January 2003 (J. O. Stratford and SJT in Brewster & Major 2005).

**Copper Sunbird** *Cinnyris cupreus*

Frequently reported from the Serondella area, Chobe National Park. One seen at Kubu Lodge, Kasane, on 28 October 1991, by A. Anderson and C. Tindell (Herremans *et al.* 1993b), and regularly seen at Mowana Lodge, Kasane, since November 1993, by RDR.

**Sousa's Shrike** *Lanius souzae* (2 including specimen)

One at Tobera, north-east of Xakao (1822A), on 4 September 1991, by M. Snethlage, was the first accepted sight record for Botswana (Herremans *et al.* 1993b). *Baikiaea* woodland is present in the area and the species is fairly regularly reported slightly further west, towards Rundu in Namibia. One was collected at Serondella, Chobe National Park, in September 1967 (Irwin *et al.* 1969). A record of one at Savuti on 18 December 2003 is pending and two possible sightings, at Mombo on 20 and 30 November 1996, were not accepted.

**Southern Boubou** *Laniarius ferrugineus*

Now known to be widespread if sparsely distributed in south-east Botswana, where it occurs in thickets and riparian woodland in the Ngotwane catchment around Gaborone and along streams further south near Lobatse (2425A,B,D, 2525B).

**Lesser Blue-eared Starling** *Lamprolornis chloropterus* (4)

Penry (1994) reported five unsubstantiated records. Flocks of several dozen, including adults and immatures, seen around Kasane, Kazungula and Serondella between 20 February 1999 and April 1999, by RDR, were the first accepted sight records. One specimen also exists. Other accepted sight records were made at Kazuma Pan on 6 March 1999, by RDR (Randall 2000, Brewster & Major 2000) and at Chobe floodplain on 16 May 2000 (8–9 birds), by SJT (Brewster & Major 2001b).

**Chestnut Weaver** *Ploceus rubiginosus* (12)

Six records mentioned by Penry (1994): five from north-west Botswana in 1988, at Gumare in June–August, Nokaneng in August, and the Thamalakane Valley in Maun in January (all by CAB), and one from 1821B on 22 April 1990. These were the first for Botswana. Bishop & Brewster (1997) amended the squares for the Gumare and Nokaneng records, to 1922A and 1922C. The two Gumare records involved flocks of 500 and ten coming to drink. Further records involved two males at Mohembo in March 1995, singles in Maun in September–October 1995, and a male at Shakawe in October 1995 (M. Herremans), ten seen at a borehole between Gumare and Nxaunxau (1921B) in August 1996 by CAB (Bishop & Brewster 1997), three at Xakanaxa on 14–17 November 1999 by D. Bishop, and three breeding colonies noted at Tale Pan on 6 February 1999 by M. Muller.

**Red-headed Quelea** *Quelea erythrops* (4)

Penry (1994) considered this species a vagrant to Botswana with just one substantiated record, in 1825A, of an adult male seen on 6 April 1985 by D. Aspinwall (Skinner 1986). The second accepted record was of several flocks totalling 'hundreds' on Sedudu Island, in the Chobe River near Kasane, and other grasslands in north-east Chobe National Park on 24 March 1993 into April (Randall 1993, Abernethy & Herremans 1994). Two further records: small flocks on the Chobe floodplain in 1994–98 between February and April (RDR in Brewster & Major 1999) and in the Kwando area in January 1996 (Randall 1996a).

**Locust Finch** *Ortygospiza locustella* (2)

A single record, of a specimen taken in 1923A in 1967, mentioned by Penry (1994). The only subsequent record is of a bird seen in the Shindi area of the Okavango Delta (the same locality as the specimen), in December 1991/January 1992, by N. D. Hunter and N. Burgess (Bishop 1995).

**Cuckoo Finch (Parasitic Weaver)** *Anomalospiza imberbis* (14)

Apart from a specimen taken at Kazuma Pan mentioned in Smithers *et al.* (1959), which may have been collected in neighbouring Zimbabwe, Penry (1994) noted just one record, in May 1986, involving several immatures north of Tamafupa

Pan (1926A), by B. Bushell and J. Balden (Herremans *et al.* 1993a). A chick in a nest of Tawny-flanked Prinia *Prinia subflava* by a lagoon of the Okavango River near Shakawe (1821B) was seen on 9 May 1991 by M. Herremans *et al.* (Hunter 1992). M. Herremans and D. Herremans-Tonnoeyr subsequently observed four full-grown Cuckoo Finches being fed by Desert Cisticolas *Cisticola aridulus* near Nochatsaa camp (1824B), on 7 March 1992 (Herremans *et al.* 1993b). More recently, RDR observed an adult male at Kasane on 6 January 1995 (Bishop & Brewster 1997), the fourth accepted record. Subsequent records are as follows: three males and two females at Nogatsaa on 5 December 1998 (Brewster & Major 1999); an adult male ringed at Selebi Phikwe (2127D4) on 24 November 1998; an adult male and adult female at Kazuma Pan on 7 February 1999 (Brewster & Major 2000a); a singing male 20 km south of Mohembo on the east bank of the Okavango River on 20 November 1999 (Brewster & Major 2001a); two recently fledged juveniles at Nogatsaa on 26 April 2000 (Brewster & Major 2001b); a male and 10–15 females at Kazuma Pan on 6 December 2000; a flock of 12 at Nxamaseri (1822C1) on 9–14 October 2002 (Brewster & Major 2005); a male at Sibuyu Forest Reserve (1825D) on 3 January 2005; a male between Gowa and Ngarange (1822C2) on 27 November 2005; a male and two females near Dungu (1825D1) on 29 November 2005 (Brewster 2006).

### Other rarities

The above list does not include all those species for which there are fewer than ten accepted records and thus are included on the Botswana Category A Rarity List, viz. Great Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*, Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*, African Cuckoo Hawk *Aviceda cuculoides*, Palm-nut Vulture *Gypohierax angolensis*, African Goshawk *Accipiter tachiro*, Crowned Eagle *Stephanoaetus coronatus*, Sooty Falcon *Falco concolor*, Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix*, Baillon's Crake *Porzana pusillus*, Blue Crane *Anthropoides paradiseus*, White-bellied Bustard *Eupodotis senegalensis*, Burchell's Courser *Cursorius rufus*, Red Knot *Calidris canutus*, Temminck's Stint *C. temminckii*, Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica*, Brown-necked (Grey-headed) Parrot *Poicephalus robustus suahelicus*, European Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*, Half-

collared Kingfisher *Alcedo semitorquata*, African Broadbill *Smithornis capensis*, Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*, Sickie-winged Chat *Cercomela sinuata*, Miombo Rock Thrush *Monticola angolensis*, Levaillant's Cisticola *Cisticola tinniens*, Cape Batis *Batis capensis*, Red-collared Widowbird *Euplectes ardens*, Black-eared Canary *Serinus mennelli* and Cape Bunting *Emberiza capensis*. Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis* has spread during the last two decades and is now frequent in south-east and east Botswana, particularly in Lobatse, Gaborone, along the South African border in the east, and Mahalapye (Brewster 1999, Tyler 2001c, and reports in *Babbler*).

### Deletions

#### Long-toed Stint *Calidris subminuta*

The single record for Botswana, a bird at Lobatse on 11 November 1984, is no longer considered acceptable, and the species has been removed from the national list (Brewster & Major 2001a).

#### Cape Rock Thrush *Monticola rupestris*

A specimen reported in Roberts (1935) cannot be traced, which led to the species being removed from the Botswana list (Herremans *et al.* 1993b). The record originated from a visit to Matabeleland in 1870 by H. Exton, and the inference is that a specimen was procured. Some of Exton's small collection was discussed by Layard (1871), but he did not mention this species.

#### Dusky Indigobird *Vidua funerea*

Mentioned by Penry (1994) 'to encourage research into the matter' but now removed from the Botswana list as there are no substantiated records and its host, African Firefinch *Lagonosticta rubricata*, has not been recorded either.

### Species accepted for Botswana in the new Roberts

There are several species that are currently not on the rarities list that were accepted for Botswana in the latest Roberts (Hockey *et al.* 2005). These include: Shelley's Francolin *Francolinus shelleyi*, which is reported to have a population in Chobe (pp. 66–67), but there are no known records; Blue Quail *Coturnix adansonii*, two plots mapped (p. 78), but no mention in the text of Botswana and this species was removed from the Botswana list in





Figure 1. Corn Crane / Râle des genêts *Crex crex*, Maun, December 2005 (G. Reed)

Figure 2. Grey (Red) Phalarope / Phalarope à bec large *Phalaropus fulicarius*, Nxai Pan, 21 January 2006 (N. Polenakis)

Figure 3. Male Red-headed Quelea / Travailleur à tête rouge *Quelea erythrops*, Linyanti, April 2005 (B. Rode)

Figure 4. Lesser Black-backed Gull / Goéland brun *Larus fuscus*, Zibadianja Lagoon, Linyanti, 10 December 2006 (B. Rode)

1992 (Borello 1992); Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*, a June 1970 sighting of five birds (p. 471); Long-tailed Pipit *Anthus longicaudatus*, claimed to occur in Moremi Game Reserve (p. 1108 and see Liversidge 1998); Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*, one plot mapped (p. 950), but no mention in the text; Isabelline Wheatear *O. isabellina*, a published claim (Hockey 1988) was subsequently rejected (Herremans 1997), but is shown on the species' map and mentioned in the text (p. 952), although this record, the only one from southern Africa, is admitted to be 'equivocal'. The Records Subcommittee welcomes supporting evidence for these species, but in its absence cannot admit them to the country list.

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<sup>a</sup> *Stephanie J. Tyler, Yew Tree Cottage, Lone Lane, Penallt, Monmouthshire NP25 4AJ, UK. E-mail: steph\_tyler2001@hotmail.com*

<sup>b</sup> *Richard D. Randall, PO Box 21161, Boseja, Maun, Botswana. E-mail: rrsfaris@yahoo.fr*

<sup>c</sup> *Chris A. Brewster, PO Box 26292, Gaborone, Botswana. E-mail: cbrewster@botsnet.bw*

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**Appendix 1.** Gazetteer of localities mentioned in the text.

Lettering and numbering of squares

A	B	A1	A2	B1	B2
C	D	A3	A4	B3	B4
		C1	C2	D1	D2
		C3	C4	D3	D4

Beetsha	18°45'S 22°57'E	1822D4
Bokaa Dam	24°26'S 26°01'E	2425B4/2426A3
Bokspits	26°53'S 20°41'E	2620D3
Borotsi	23°02'S 27°34'E	2327B1
Chanoga	20°10'S 23°48'E	2023B2
Dopotta, Tuli Block	22°05'S 29°00'E	2229A1
Francistown	21°10'S 27°30'E	2127B1
Gaborone	24°39'S 25°54'E	2425D2
Gaborone Dam	24°43'S 25°54'E	2425D2
Gumare	19°20'S 22°10'E	1922A3
Ikoga	18°51'S 22°18'E	1822C4
Jedibe	19°02'S 22°32'E	1922B1
Jwaneng slimes dam/ponds	24°32'S 24°41'E	2424D1
Jwaneng sewage ponds	24°35'S 24°42'E	2424D2
Kabulabula, Chobe floodplain	17°48'S 24°57'E	1724D4
Kanye	24°59'S 25°20'E	2425C4
Kasane	17°48'S 25°09'E	1725C3
Kasane Forest Reserve	17°55'S 25°10'E	1725C3
Katchikau	18°09'S 24°29'E	1824A2
Kavimba	18°04'S 24°35'E	1824B1
Kazuma Pan	18°22'S 25°30'E	1825A4/B3
Kazungula	17°48'S 25°16'E	1725C3
Kgale Hill	24°41'S 25°52'E	2425D2
Kgoro Pan	25°26'S 25°28'E	2525A4
Khutse Game Reserve	23°22'S 24°26'E	2324A4/C
Kings Camp, Linyanti	18°30'S 23°37'E	1823D1
Kopong Hills	24°22'S 25°50'E	2425B4
Kwando River	18°00'S 23°18'E	1823A2
Kweyane	26°04'S 22°15'E	2622A2
Kwikamaba	18°19'S 24°53'E	1824B4
Lemone Pan	22°40'S 27°04'E	2227D1
Lerala	22°47'S 27°45'E	2227D4
Lesoma (Leshuma) Valley	17°57'S 25°17'E	1725C4
Letsibogo Dam	21°52'S 27°48'E	2127D4
Lobatse	25°14'S 25°40'E	2525B1
Magwexhlana Pools	19°15'S 23°24'E	1923A4
Manamodi Pan	25°03'S 22°08'E	2522A1
Mannyelanong Hills	25°03'S 25°45'E	2525B2

Masetleng Pan	23°42'S 20°55'E	2320D2
Maun	19°58'S 23°26'E	1923C4
Mashatu Game Reserve	22°09'S 29°15'E	2229A1/2
Mmabarwa Pan	21°54'S 28°17'E	2128C4
Modipe Hill	24°39'S 26°13'E	2426D1
Mogobane Dam	24°58'S 25°41'E	2425D3
Mohembo	18°17'S 21°47'E	1821B4
Molepolole Gorge	24°26'S 25°31'E	2425B3
Mombo	19°13'S 22°47'E	1922B2
Moremi Game Reserve	19°18'S 23°15'E	1923A3/4,B1/2
Mpandamatenga	18°32'S 25°40'E	1825D1
Nata village	20°09'S 26°07'E	2026A1
Nata Delta	20°10'S 26°10'E	2026A3
Ngoma Bridge	17°55'S 24°43'E	1724D3
Ngotwane River, Broadhurst	24°37'S 25°58'E	2425D2
Ngotwane south of Gaborone	24°46'S 25°56'E	2425D4
Nogatsaa/Nchotsaa, Chobe NP	18°17'S 24°57'E	1824B4/1825A3
Ngwahla	19°28'S 26°07'E	1926A3
Nokaneng	19°42'S 22°12'E	1922C1
North Gate, Moremi GR	19°10'S 23°44'E	1923B1
Nossob Valley	from Bokspits north along South African border	
Ntimbale Dam	20°52'S 27°27'E	2027C4
Nxai Pan	19°54'S 24°46'E	1924D4
Nxamaseri	18°34'S 21°59'E	1822C1
Orapa	21°16'S 25°19'E	2125A4
Phakalane sewage ponds	24°35'S 25°59'E	2425D2
Pitsane	25°28'S 25°36'E	2525B3
Polentswa Pan, KTP	25°01'S 20°26'E	2520A2
Puku Flats, Chobe floodplain	17°47'S 25°03'E	1725C3
Qaaxhwa Lediba	19°03'S 22°23'E	1922A2
Ramatlabama	25°40'S 25°31'E	2525D1
Samedupi	20°07'S 23°30'E	2023B1
Santandibe	19°30'S 23°19'E	1923C2
Savuti, Chobe National Park	18°42'S 24°08'E	1824C1
Sefhare	23°01'S 27°31'E	2327B1
Selebi Phikwe	21°59'S 27°50'E	2127D4
Seleka Farm, Tuli Block	22°57'S 27°59'E	2227D3/4
Sefophe	22°13'S 27°57'E	2227B2
Selinda Spillway	18°34'S 23°20'E	1823C/D
Serondella, Chobe National Park	17°50'S 24°59'E	1724D4
Shakawe	18°22'S 21°50'E	1821B3
Shashe Dam	21°10'S 27°27'E	2127A4
Shindi	19°08'S 23°09'E	1923A1
Shoshong Hills	23°00'S 26°30'E	2326B1
Struizendam	26°38'S 20°38'E	2620D1
Sua Spit, Magkadikgadi Pans	20°35'S 26°09'E	2026C1
Sukses, Limpopo	22°25'S 28°57'E	2228B4
Sunday Pan, CKGR	21°20'S 23°41'E	2123B3
Swart Pan	24°15'S 20°01'E	2420A3
Talana marsh	22°15'S 28°59'E	2228B4
Talana Farms	22°14'S 29°01'E	2228B2/4
Thamalakane River, Maun	19°57'S 23°27'E	1923C4
Tlharaseele	25°31'S 25°38'E	2525D1
Tlokweng border post	24°42'S 26°05'E	2426C1
Tsholofelo sewage ponds	24°37'S 25°58'E	2425D2
Tsodilo Hills	18°45'S 21°45'E	1821D4
Tswapong Hills	22°40'S 27°30'E	2227C2/D1
Winteroord Dam	22°15'S 28°55'E	2228B4
Xaxaba	19°32'S 23°03'E	1923C1
Xigera	19°25'S 22°45'E	1922B4
Xugana	19°04'S 23°06'E	1923A1
Zibal(d)ianja, Linyanti	18°34'S 23°32'E	1823D1



# Preliminary survey of Taita Falcon *Falco fasciinucha* in the Drakensberg escarpment region of Mpumalanga and Limpopo Provinces, South Africa

Andrew R. Jenkins<sup>a</sup>, David G. Allan<sup>b</sup>, André Botha<sup>c</sup>, Alan Harvey<sup>d</sup>, Alan C. Kemp<sup>e</sup>, Ara Monadjem<sup>f</sup>, Lucia Rodrigues<sup>a</sup>, David Rushworth<sup>g</sup>, Alan Stephenson<sup>d</sup> and Anthony J. van Zyl<sup>h</sup>

Inventaire préliminaire du Faucon taita *Falco fasciinucha* dans la région de l'escarpement du Drakensberg des provinces de Mpumalanga et Limpopo, Afrique du Sud. Le Faucon taita *Falco fasciinucha* est une espèce rare et mal connue, pour laquelle on a repéré moins de 40 sites de nidification en Afrique de l'Est subsaharienne. Centré sur l'escarpement de Mpumalanga/Limpopo en Afrique du Sud, un inventaire a été organisé afin de déterminer la taille et l'importance pour la conservation de la population du Faucon taita dans le nord du pays. Une équipe d'observateurs expérimentés a passée deux semaines en septembre 2006 sur des sites de nidification connus ou probables. Deux nouveaux nids ont été trouvés, en plus des deux sites déjà connus dans la région. Trois couples de Faucons pèlerins *F. peregrinus*, 12 couples de Faucons laniers *F. biarmicus*, 23 couples de Crécerelles des clochers *F. (tinnunculus) rupicolus*, cinq couples d'Aigles de Verreaux *Aquila verreauxii* et cinq couples de Buses rounoirs *Buteo rufofuscus* ont également été localisés. À cause du manque de temps et des contraintes logistiques, tous les sites possibles ou probables n'ont pas pu être contrôlés en 2006. Un deuxième inventaire a donc été proposé pour 2007, ainsi qu'un atelier Pan-Africain pour discuter des priorités de recherche pour cette espèce menacée.

**Summary.** The Taita Falcon *Falco fasciinucha* is a rare and poorly known species, with fewer than 40 known nest sites scattered across eastern sub-Saharan Africa. A survey was initiated to determine the size and conservation value of a possible population of Taita Falcons in northern South Africa, centred on the Mpumalanga/Limpopo escarpment region. In September 2006 a team of expert observers spent two weeks searching for Taita Falcon nest sites. Two new nests were located, in addition to two sites already known in the area. Three pairs of Peregrine Falcon *F. peregrinus*, 12 pairs of Lanner Falcon *F. biarmicus*, 23 pairs of Rock Kestrel *F. (tinnunculus) rupicolus*, five pairs of Verreaux's Eagle *Aquila verreauxii* and five pairs of Jackal Buzzard *Buteo rufofuscus* were also located. Not all possible or likely Taita Falcon sites were checked in 2006 because of time and logistical constraints. A repeat survey in 2007 is proposed, and a Pan-African workshop is suggested to discuss research priorities for this threatened species.

Taita Falcon *Falco fasciinucha* is a small and highly specialised, bird-hunting raptor, which is sparsely and patchily distributed through eastern sub-Saharan Africa (Kemp 1994, Ferguson-Lees & Christie 2001). Whilst it is poorly known throughout much of its range, the species is generally considered to be rare and is largely restricted to well-wooded habitats, and to mountains or deep river valleys where high, sheer rock-faces are available as nesting and foraging sites. Aspects of its natural history have been studied opportunistically at sites in Uganda (Möller 1989), Malaŵi (Hunter *et al.* 1979), Zambia (Dowsett 1983) and South Africa (Jenkins *et al.* 1991). A more concerted and intensive research

initiative in Zimbabwe has yielded the only comprehensive information on regional population size, diet and breeding performance (Hartley *et al.* 1993, Hartley 2000).

The global population of Taita Falcon is probably substantially less than 500 pairs, and fewer than 40 nest sites are known, most of them in the Zambezi Valley, Zimbabwe (Hartley 2000). Even in known areas of concentration, the species seems to occur irregularly, with territories prone to sudden abandonment (Hartley 2000; R. Hartley unpubl.). Breeding success is generally poor, and estimates of certain key life-history parameters (e.g. age of first breeding, length of incubation, capacity to re-lay after clutch failure), largely

derived from small samples of captive birds, suggest that the species' reproductive potential is unusually low (R. Hartley unpubl.). Taita Falcon is considered globally Near Threatened (BirdLife International 2004). However, given its sparse distribution, our generally poor knowledge of its status, even in supposed areas of concentration, and that these areas may not be secure, we believe this classification merits upgrading and that Taita Falcon should be afforded the highest priority by research and conservation agencies throughout its range.

The first breeding pair of Taita Falcons in South Africa was discovered on the Drakensberg escarpment, in Mpumalanga Province, in the late 1980s, and was formally documented in the early 1990s (Jenkins *et al.* 1991, Milstein 2000). Since then, another definite nest site has been located in the same area and 5–6 other possible sites identified, although the region has not been thoroughly or systematically searched (D. Rushworth & P. le Milstein unpubl.). Hence, available information indicates that the Mpumalanga/Limpopo escarpment area may support a relatively significant number of Taita Falcons. The primary objective of the survey undertaken in September 2006 was to obtain a more accurate estimate of the number of breeding pairs present in the region, as an important precursor to a longer-term research and monitoring study of the resource requirements and conservation status of this population.

## Methods

In order to encompass the maximum amount of remote, high cliff habitat within an area of manageable size, the study was centred on the Blyde River Canyon Nature Reserve (24°33'S 30°48'E), and included the main escarpment line, extending c.20 km south-east to just south of Mariepskop, and c.40 km north-west to the Olifants River valley, just west of the J. G. Strijdom Tunnel (Fig. 1). The escarpment marks the abrupt interface between the Highveld and the Lowveld in north-eastern South Africa. The Lowveld edge features grass-covered plateaux grading into mountain peaks with broadleaf woodland and deeply incised gorges. Altitudes reach c.2,000 m, mean daily temperatures vary from around 5–25°C, and annual rainfall is c.900–1,000 mm, falling mainly in summer. The Lowveld plains to the north-east possess broadleaf and *Acacia* woodland, with

riparian forest along larger watercourses and Afromontane forest adjacent to the escarpment in the south-east. Altitude is fairly uniform at c.500–600 m, mean daily temperatures vary from about 15–30°C, and annual rainfall totals c.800 mm, most of which falls in summer. The escarpment line itself constitutes a multi-tiered array of moderate to very high (>300 m), sheer rock faces (Fig. 2), interspersed with steep, densely wooded slopes, and with a total vertical extent of c.500–600 m. Two major rivers cut the escarpment flowing roughly south-west to north-east—the Olifant's and the Blyde. The latter is impounded to form the Blyderivierspoort Dam which fills the lower reaches of the Blyde River Canyon.

A very simple and direct approach to the survey was employed, involving periods of passive observation by a small team of expert raptor biologists, positioned strategically along the top of the escarpment, or on the scree slopes below the cliff-line. It was performed over 15 days (17 September–1 October) coinciding with the start of the breeding season, when Taita Falcon pairs were likely to be present and conspicuous on their nest cliffs (R. Hartley pers. comm.).

All survey work was informed by observations made previously during helicopter surveys conducted in the early to mid 1990s (Jenkins *et al.* 1991, Wagner & Jenkins 1996; T. Wagner unpubl.) and by ground surveys conducted sporadically over the last 15 years (Milstein 2000; D. Rushworth & P. Milstein unpubl.). This information was collated and mapped, and a strategy was developed for the optimal distribution of pairs of observers along the cliff-line, to obtain maximum coverage of the areas considered most likely to hold breeding pairs. Thereafter, each day the team of observers was split into 2–3 groups of 2–3 people each, and each group manned selected observation points, equipped with good-quality 10× binoculars, 20–60× telescopes, two-way radios, appropriate 1:50,000 topographic maps, and GPS units, to complete observation periods of 6–12 hours. All Taita Falcon sightings were recorded in as much detail as possible, with emphasis on whether or not (i) pairs were present, (ii) the birds observed exhibited any breeding behaviour, and (iii) definite or possible nest ledges could be identified. Any incidental observations of other notable cliff-nesting species present in the area—Peregrine Falcon *F. peregrinus*, Lanner Falcon *F.*



*biarmicus*, Rock Kestrel *F. (tinnunculus) rupicolus*, Verreaux's Eagle *Aquila verreauxii*, Jackal Buzzard *Buteo rufofuscus*, White-necked Raven *Corvus albi-collis* and Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*—were also recorded. Parts of the area were also searched by helicopter, although attempts to do this with any rigour or success were thwarted by a range of practical problems. Ultimately, the helicopter surveys did not add materially to the results of the survey.

Results and Discussion

In total, c.50 possible Taita Falcon nest cliffs were surveyed, including c.50 km of the main escarpment (Fig. 1), with c.60 person-days of effort. The survey located definite or probable nesting areas of 52 pairs of cliff-nesting raptors—four pairs of Taita Falcons, three pairs of Peregrine Falcons, 12 pairs of Lanner Falcons (Table 1), 23 pairs of Rock Kestrels, five pairs of Verreaux's Eagles and five pairs of Jackal Buzzards—as well as two pairs of White-necked Ravens and three pairs of Black

Storks. Two of the four Taita Falcon sites recorded were already known, so only two new sites were found. Of the four pairs, one was observed on the first day of the survey and had evidently not yet laid but was actively involved in ledge displays, one was watched regularly throughout the survey and appeared not to have laid by the end, but was subsequently reported to have raised at least one young by the end of the year, and the other two were well into incubation by the end of September. Unfortunately, it was not possible to return to the study area later in the season to accurately determine the outcome of each breeding attempt.

Four Taita Falcon nest sites is too few for meaningful analysis of habitat preferences, or even to develop a useful search image of likely nesting areas to focus future survey efforts. To compound this problem, the four sites were quite markedly different in their physical structure. One was on a high, very large, primary escarpment rock-face,

Table 1. Approximate physical parameters and spacing of the large falcon nest sites located during the 2006 Taita Falcon survey of the Mpumalanga/Limpopo Drakensberg escarpment.

Tableau 1. Paramètres physiques et espacements approximatifs des sites de nidification des grands faucons localisés pendant l'inventaire du Faucon taita de 2006 sur l' escarpement du Drakensberg de Mpumalanga/Limpopo.

Site name	cliff height (m)	elevation (m)	aspect	underlying habitat	nearest known conspecific pair (km)	nearest known large falcon pair species	distance (km)
Taita Falcon							
1	>300	750–1,000	SE	riparian forest / woodland	4.1	Peregrine Falcon	0.8
2	150–300	500–750	NE	woodland and thicket	4.1	Lanner Falcon	2.6
3	75–150	250–500	NW	riparian forest / woodland	7.8	Lanner Falcon	4.1
4	75–150	<250	NW	riverbed / riparian thicket	7.8	Lanner Falcon	4.3
Peregrine Falcon							
1	150–300	250–500	NW	woodland / dam	6.6	Lanner Falcon	1.5
2	150–300	250–500	SE	riparian forest / woodland	6.6	Taita Falcon	0.8
3	75–150	750–1,000	SE	woodland and thicket	8.6	Lanner Falcon	1.0
Lanner Falcon							
1*	150–300	750–1,000	NE	forest and plantation	2.2	Lanner Falcon	2.2
2*	150–300	750–1,000	NE	forest and plantation	2.2	Lanner Falcon	2.2
3	150–300	>1,000	E	forest	1.3	Lanner Falcon	1.3
4*	>300	>1,000	NE	forest	1.3	Lanner Falcon	1.3
5	75–150	250–500	SE	woodland / dam	4.2	Peregrine Falcon	1.5
6	75–150	250–500	NE	woodland / dam	4.2	Peregrine Falcon	2.7
7	>300	750–1,000	E	woodland and thicket	5.3	Taita Falcon	0.9
8	>300	750–1,000	NE	woodland	1.7	Lanner Falcon	1.7
9	75–150	500–750	E	woodland	1.7	Peregrine Falcon	1.0
10	150–300	750–1,000	NW	woodland	3.3	Lanner Falcon	3.3
11	150–300	500–750	NW	woodland and thicket	3.3	Lanner Falcon	3.3
12	75–150	250–500	NW	woodland / riverbed	7.2	Taita Falcon	3.6

\*These Lanner sites were occupied by Peregrines in the mid to late 1990s (Wagner & Jenkins 1996)

two were on lower, smaller, secondary faces, and the fourth was on a low, smallish crag immediately adjacent to a major river. Generally, Taita, Peregrine and Lanner Falcons all tended to favour the lower-tier cliffs of the escarpment, perhaps because these tended to be the highest and most sheer, less frequently covered by mist, and situated closest to what is most likely to be the falcons' primary avian prey base, in the Lowveld woodland below the escarpment (Jenkins & Avery 1999, Hartley 2000).

Whilst our survey data cannot be considered as absolute counts of falcon populations in the area, mean nearest neighbour distances for Taita, Peregrine and Lanner Falcons on the Mpumalanga/Limpopo escarpment (6.0, 7.3 and 3.2 km respectively; Table 1) compare well with figures for these species elsewhere in Africa (Hartley 2000, Jenkins & Hartley 2005, Jenkins 2005a,b). Interestingly, the Peregrine Falcon population of the area appears to have decreased, with three sites which had held pairs at least until the mid-1990s (Jenkins & Wagner 1996; W. R. Tarboton & D. G. Allan pers. comm.) now occupied by breeding Lanners. Competition for nest sites and prey with its larger congeners has been cited as a possible reason for the rarity of the Taita Falcon (Hartley 2000). Taita Falcons were found breeding within 1 km of both Peregrine and Lanner pairs on the Mpumalanga/Limpopo escarpment (Table 1), and at one site Taita Falcons were observed successfully defending their territory against a close-neighbouring pair of Lanners.

Overall, the survey was a qualified success. Much of the available habitat was well covered, general knowledge of the Taita Falcon in South Africa, and how and where to look for this species in difficult, remote terrain, was vastly improved. Also, the known breeding population of Taita Falcons in South Africa was doubled, and a partial survey of the cliff-nesting raptor community of the Mpumalanga/Limpopo escarpment region was completed. However, whilst progress was made, a number of promising locations in the survey area were either not visited at all, or were not properly surveyed in 2006 due to time and logistical constraints. These sites should either be revisited or checked for the first time for Taita Falcon pairs before the overall survey can be considered comprehensive.



Figure 1. Google Earth® image of the Mpumalanga/Limpopo escarpment region, South Africa, showing the extent of the 2006 Taita Falcon *Falco fasciinucha* survey area (outlined in white), with the sections of cliff which were surveyed (marked in red).

Image de Google Earth® de la région de l'escarpement de Mpumalanga/Limpopo, Afrique du Sud, indiquant l'étendue de l'aire de l'inventaire du Faucon taita *Falco fasciinucha* de 2006 (délimitée en blanc), avec les sections de la crête de l'escarpement qui ont été contrôlées (marquées en rouge).



Figure 2. The Mpumalanga/Limpopo escarpment cliff-line: looking south from the summit of Mariepskop towards Hebronberg (Anthony J. van Zyl)

La crête de l'escarpement de Mpumalanga/Limpopo : vue à partir du sommet de Mariepskop vers Hebronberg, au sud (Anthony J. van Zyl)

Once the initial survey has been fully completed (preferably during the 2007 breeding season), the value of these new data for the southernmost Taita Falcon population would be greatly enhanced if it were fully integrated into existing knowledge of the species in areas to the north. This could best be achieved by means of a short workshop, bringing together raptor biologists with experience of Taita Falcons in their respective parts





Figure 3. Taita Falcon / Faucon taita *Falco fasciinucha* (Dalena Mostert)

of the continent. Key amongst these would be representatives from Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa. Such a workshop is essential for pooling accumulated knowledge of Taita Falcons and developing a prioritised, Pan-African survey, monitoring and research plan for this rare and possibly highly threatened species across its disjointed range.

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<sup>a</sup>Western Cape Raptor Research Programme, Percy FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology, University of Cape Town, Private Bag X3, Rondebosch 7700, South Africa. E-mail: Andrew.Jenkins@uct.ac.za

<sup>b</sup>Curator of Birds, Durban Natural Science Museum, PO Box 4085, Durban 4000, South Africa.

<sup>c</sup>Manager, Birds of Prey Working Group, Endangered Wildlife Trust, Private Bag X11, Parkview 2122, South Africa.

<sup>d</sup>PO Box 304, Grahamstown 6140, South Africa.

<sup>e</sup>Postnet Suite 38, Private Bag X19, Menlo Park, 0102, South Africa

<sup>f</sup>University of Swaziland, All Out Africa Research Unit, Dept. Sci. Biol., Private Bag 4, Kwaluseni, Swaziland.

<sup>g</sup>Trackers, PO Box 21, Hoedspruit 1380, South Africa.

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# Observations of threatened birds in the East Usambara Mountains, Tanzania

Luca Borghesio<sup>a</sup>, Jasson R. M. John<sup>b</sup>, Elia Mulungu<sup>c</sup>, Victor Mkongewa<sup>d</sup>, Martin Joho<sup>e</sup> and Norbert J. Cordeiro<sup>f</sup>

**Observations sur les oiseaux menacés dans les montagnes des Usambaras orientales, Tanzanie.** Les observations et les résultats préliminaires d'un inventaire ornithologique des montagnes des Usambaras orientales, au nord-est de la Tanzanie, sont présentés. En utilisant des comptages par points standardisés et des observations opportunistes, les auteurs ont collecté des informations concernant la distribution, le choix de l'habitat et l'abondance relative des espèces ayant la plus haute importance pour la conservation. Parmi les 124 espèces recensées pendant l'inventaire, six se trouvent sur la Liste Rouge et neuf sont à répartition restreinte. Un nombre significatif d'espèces d'importance pour la conservation a été trouvé à la lisière des forêts et dans les habitats cultivés. Les exigences en matière d'habitat des espèces menacées varient selon les espèces : tandis que celles qui cherchent leur nourriture au sol (Merle des Usambaras *Turdus (olivaceus) roehli*, *Modulatrix* spp.) ont clairement besoin de forêts intactes, le Souimanga d'Amani *Hedydipna pallidigastra*, le Souimanga à col rouge *Anthreptes rubritorques*, le Touraco de Fischer *Tauraco fischeri*, le Rufipenne de Kenrick *Poeoptera kenricki* et la Couturière de Moreau *Artisornis moreau* sont aussi fréquents dans des habitats secondaires perturbés, le long des lisières des forêts ou même dans les milieux cultivés relativement ouverts. Ceci semble indiquer que certaines espèces menacées pourraient bénéficier d'initiatives de conservation limitant la dégradation des lisières et des milieux cultivés (par exemple, la plantation d'arbres indigènes utiles).

**Summary.** We report the preliminary observations and results of a survey of the birds of the East Usambara Mountains, north-east Tanzania. Using standardised point counts and opportunistic searches, we collected information on the distribution, habitat selection and relative abundance of those species of greatest conservation concern. Amongst the 124 species recorded during the survey, six are listed in the global Red Data book and nine are considered to be restricted-range. Forest edges and agricultural habitats had notable numbers of species of conservation importance. Habitat requirements of the species of conservation concern differed: whilst ground-foragers (Usambara Thrush *Turdus (olivaceus) roehli*, *Modulatrix* spp.) are clearly dependent on intact forest, Banded Sunbird *Anthreptes rubritorques*, Amani Sunbird *Hedydipna pallidigastra*, Fischer's Turaco *Tauraco fischeri*, Kenrick's Starling *Poeoptera kenricki* and Long-billed Tailorbird *Artisornis moreau* are also frequent in successional habitats created by disturbance, at forest edges or even in relatively open, agricultural landscapes. This suggests that some threatened species might benefit from conservation initiatives (e.g., planting of useful indigenous trees) specifically targeted to counter the degradation of such 'fringe' habitats.

The East Usambara Mountains, in north-eastern Tanzania, form part of the Eastern Arc Mountains, a geologically ancient range that runs from southern Kenya to northern Mozambique, wherein geographic isolation and climatic stability have produced remarkable endemic biodiversity (Burgess *et al.* 2007a). The main habitat in the Eastern Arc is montane forest that grades into lowland forest. Due to the small area of remaining forest and the severe human impact (Burgess *et al.* 2007a,b), the Eastern Arc is one of the most

endangered biodiversity hotspots in the world (Brooks *et al.* 2002).

More than 50% of the original forest cover of the East Usambaras has been removed for cultivation (Hamilton & Bensted-Smith 1989), which comprises intensively managed tea plantations and traditional shifting agriculture practiced by local inhabitants and migrant workers. Although commercial timber extraction was banned in Tanzanian montane forests in the late 1980s, pressure is still exerted on the remaining forest of the



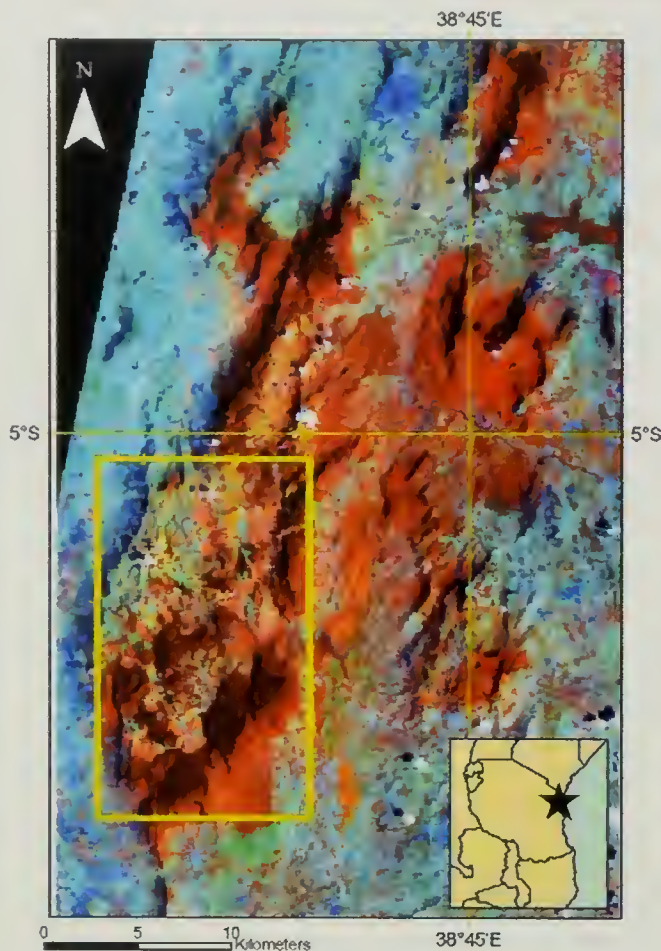


Figure 1. The East Usambara Mountains In this infra-red satellite image, forest is deep red, tea and tree plantations are orange or green, and bush blue. The yellow rectangle highlights the study area.

Les Usambaras orientales. Sur cette image satellite infrarouge, la forêt est rouge, les plantations de thé et d'arbres sont oranges ou vertes, et la brousse bleue. Le rectangle jaune indique la zone d'étude.

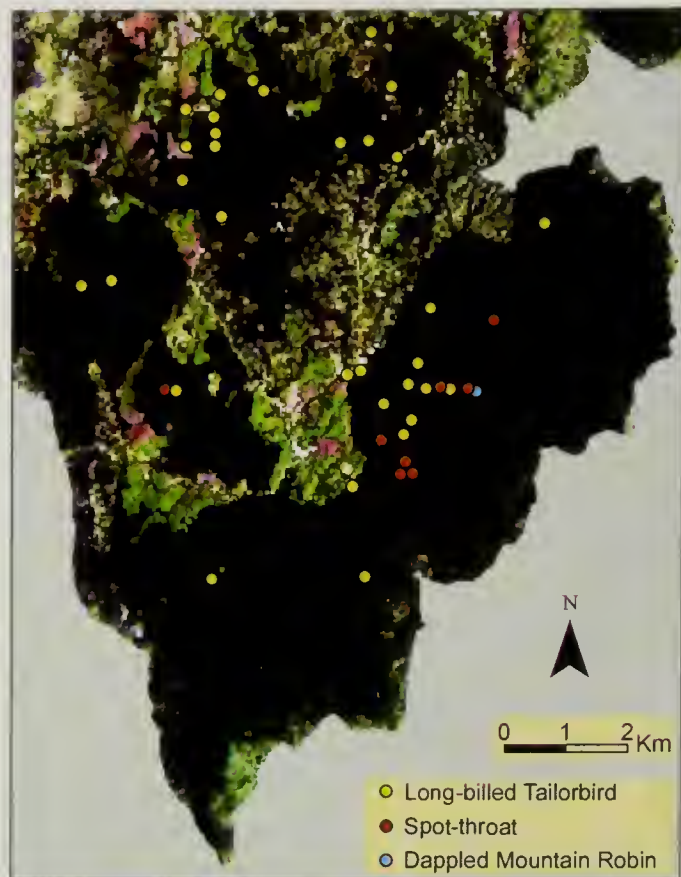
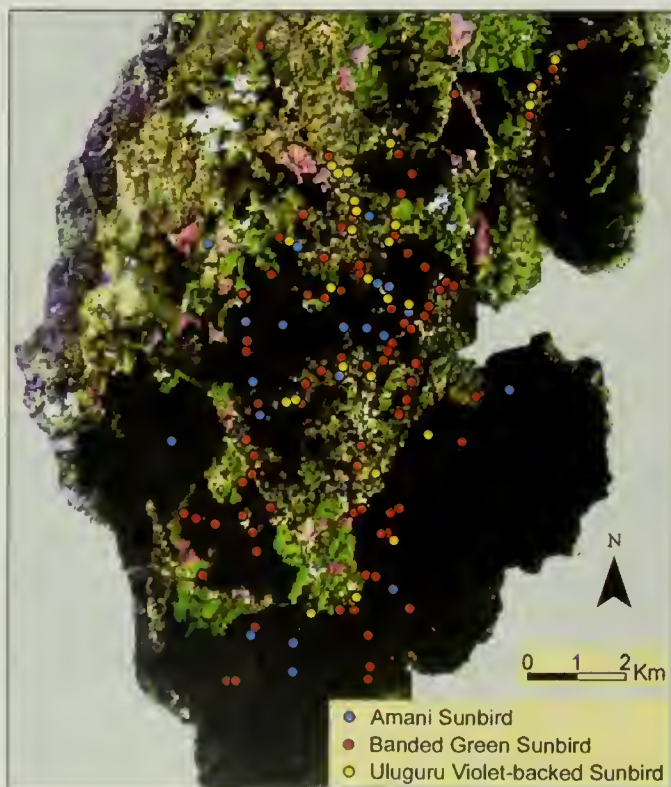


Figure 2. Records of Long-billed Tailorbird *Artisornis moreaui*, Spot-throat *Modulatrix stictigula* and Dappled Mountain Robin *M. orostruthus* within the study area, East Usambara Mountains. In this satellite image, forest appears as deep green, tea plantations as light green or reddish and smallholder agricultural areas are a fine-grain mosaic of different shades of green. Areas below 700 m appear as grey.

Les observations de la Couturière de Moreau *Artisornis moreaui*, la Modulatrice à lunettes *Modulatrix stictigula* et la Modulatrice grivelée *M. orostruthus* dans la zone d'étude, Usambaras orientales. Sur cette image satellite la forêt est vert sombre, les plantations de thé sont vert clair ou rougeâtre et zone cultivées forment une mosaïque de différentes teintes de vert. Les zones en dessous de 700 m sont grisées.

Figure 3. Records of threatened sunbirds (Amani Sunbird *Hedydipna pallidigaster*, Banded Sunbird *Anthreptes rubritorques* and Uluguru Violet-backed Sunbird *Anthreptes neglectus*) in the study area, East Usambara Mountains. Map key as in Fig. 2.

Les observations des souimangas menacés (Souimanga d'Amani *Hedydipna pallidigaster*, Souimanga à col rouge *Anthreptes rubritorques* et Souimanga des Ulugurus *A. neglectus*) dans la zone d'étude, Usambaras orientales. Couleurs de la carte comme dans la fig. 2.





Southern Banded Snake Eagle / Circaète barré *Circaetus fasciolatus* (Hugh Chittenden)



Male Amani Sunbird / Souimanga d'Amani *Hedydipna pallidigastra* (Steve Garvie)



Female Amani Sunbird / Souimanga d'Amani *Hedydipna pallidigastra* (Steve Garvie)

East Usambaras. The main current environmental issues are the expansion of smallholder shifting agriculture (cardamom *Elettaria cardamomum*, clove *Syzygium aromaticum*, cinnamon *Cinnamomum verum*, sugarcane *Saccharum* sp., as well as numerous traditional food crops), illegal timber extraction by local people and by tea companies which use large amounts of firewood for drying tea, the widespread trapping and hunting of mammals, and the spread of invasive species, especially the tree *Maesopsis eminii*, which was introduced from Western Africa for forestry purposes in the early 20th century (Viisteensaari *et al.* 2000, Cordeiro *et al.* 2004).

The East Usambaras host several globally threatened and restricted-range species of birds (Stattersfield *et al.* 1998, IUCN 2006). However, despite these mountains having a long history of ornithological research (e.g. Moreau 1935, Stuart 1983; reviewed in Cordeiro 1998), there is a dearth of information on the current status, habitat selection and population trends of most birds in the area. In particular, almost all biological research in the Usambaras has traditionally focused on forest, whilst habitat mosaics created by smallholder agriculture have been very little studied: these habitats can host considerable species diversity in Central America (Luck & Daily 2003) and Uganda (Naidoo 2004), and might therefore have some conservation value also in tropical East Africa.

In early 2006, we commenced a multi-year monitoring programme of the threatened bird species in the East Usambaras. In the long term, this is expected to provide detailed information on population size, numerical trends and habitat selection of the birds at greatest risk. We envisage that these data will form a baseline against which results of future monitoring can be compared. Here we report some preliminary findings obtained during the first year of field work.

### Study area and research methods

Our study focuses on an area of c.200 km<sup>2</sup> at altitudes of 750–1,200 m in the southern East Usambara Mountains (Fig. 1); approximately half of this area is protected by the Amani Nature Reserve. The study area covers a range of habitats, including tea plantations, primary and degraded forest, isolated forest fragments, as well as settlements and open areas occupied by permanent or

shifting agriculture. We established a network of 354 sampling points along 32 transects, each one with 10–13 points spaced 200 m apart. For each point, we recorded geographical coordinates using a GPS and documented the habitat type (smallholder agriculture, degraded forest with more than 15% *Maesopsis*, and undisturbed/slightly disturbed forest with 15% or less *Maesopsis*) within a radius of 100 m; *Maesopsis* has been previously used as an indicator of disturbance and habitat quality (Newmark 2006). In general, we surveyed each habitat in proportion to its representation within the study area. However, we avoided tea and *Eucalyptus* plantations because of their low bird diversity (John & Kabigumila 2007). Of the 354 sample points, 92 were in smallholder agriculture, 79 in disturbed forest, 84 in undisturbed/slightly disturbed forest, and 99 were classified as ecotones.

We established the network of census points in January 2006 and performed initial counts. All 354 points were resampled between 7 September and 14 October 2006. We surveyed the avifauna of each point using limited-distance, ten-minute duration point counts, during which all the birds seen or heard within a 200 m radius were recorded. Counts were undertaken between 06:00 and 10:30 hrs. During the survey, we also made opportunistic observations of all species of conservation concern. These records provide additional information concerning the species' distribution across the landscape.

As we suspected that the Long-billed Tailorbird *Artisornis moreau*, a Critically Endangered species (IUCN 2006), was under-recorded during the counts due to its secretive behaviour and preference for extremely dense vegetation (see Cordeiro *et al.* 2001), we undertook additional work focused on this species, using playback.

## Results

During the point counts we recorded 5,306 observations (6,988 individuals) of 124 species, of which seven are considered threatened or Near Threatened (IUCN 2006) and nine have restricted ranges (i.e. less than 50,000 km<sup>2</sup>: Stattersfield *et al.* 1998; Table 1). We recorded significant numbers of threatened and restricted-range species in all habitats. Edges and smallholder agriculture usually had high numbers of some species of con-

servation concern, in part due to the abundance of Kenrick's Starling *Poeoptera kenricki* (which was never observed in the forest interior), but Amani *Hedydipna pallidigastrea*, Banded *Anthreptes rubritorques* and Uluguru Violet-backed Sunbirds *Anthreptes neglectus*, and Fischer's Turaco *Tauraco fischeri* were also regularly recorded in these habitats (Table 2). Undisturbed forest had the highest diversity of ground-foraging species (Spot-throat *Modulatrix stictigula*, Dappled Mountain Robin *M. orostruthus*, Sharpe's Akalat *Sheppardia sharpei* and Usambara Thrush *Turdus [olivaceus] roehli*), the first two of which had some of the lowest encounters overall (Table 1).

## Notes on selected species

### Southern Banded Snake Eagle *Circaetus fasciolatus*

This Near-Threatened species was observed nine times during the standardised counts, and a further ten locations were pinpointed at other times during the survey. Although it was observed in all habitat types (Table 1), mean frequencies appeared higher in undisturbed forest than in other habitats (Table 2), but our sample size is too small to reach definitive conclusions for now. Numbers in forest habitats might have been under-estimated as silent individuals flying above the canopy might have gone undetected. In September–October 2006, the species was very vocal and probably breeding. We obtained a possible breeding record on 19 September, when one was observed carrying nest material to a tree in a *Eucalyptus* plantation. Proven breeding was noted in October 2005 (NJC pers. obs).

Our data, whilst still limited, suggest that the Southern Banded Snake Eagle prefers forest habitats in the East Usambaras, but also uses, at least for foraging, and perhaps even for nesting, anthropogenic habitats adjacent to forest.

### Fischer's Turaco *Tauraco fischeri*

Fischer's Turaco is a restricted-range, Near-Threatened species endemic to the East African coast, from southern Somalia to northern Tanzania, but also penetrates inland to some montane massifs in northern Tanzania, including the East Usambaras (Britton 1980). Fischer's Turaco was frequently recorded in all habitats, partly because its loud calls could be heard from several hundreds metres distance. Our data (Table 1)



**Table 1.** List of species observed during the counts performed in September–October 2006, in 354 sample points in the southern East Usambara Mountains. Total numbers of individuals observed in the four major habitat types are also listed. Threat status follows IUCN (2006) and definition of restricted-range species Stattersfield *et al.* (1998). Abbreviations: NT = Near Threatened; VU = Vulnerable; EN = Endangered; CR = Critically Endangered.

**Table 1.** Liste des espèces observées lors des comptages exécutés en septembre–octobre 2006 à 354 points d'échantillonnage dans la partie sud des Usambaras orientales. Le nombre total d'individus observés dans les quatre principaux types d'habitat est également mentionné. Le statut des espèces menacées suit la classification de l'UICN (2006), la définition des espèces à répartition restreinte suit Stattersfield *et al.* (1998). Abréviations: NT = Quasi menacé; VU = Vulnérable; EN = Menacé d'extinction; CR = Gravement menacé d'extinction.

Common name	Scientific name	Threat status	Restricted range	Undisturbed forest	Disturbed forest	Edge	Smallholder agriculture
Olive Ibis	<i>Bostrychia olivacea</i>			0	4	0	0
Southern Banded Snake Eagle	<i>Circaetus fasciolatus</i>	NT		4	1	3	2
African Harrier Hawk	<i>Polyboroides typus</i>			0	0	2	1
African Goshawk	<i>Accipiter tachiro</i>			3	1	1	0
Little Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter minullus</i>			0	0	1	1
Black Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter melanoleucus</i>			1	0	0	2
Augur Buzzard	<i>Buteo augur</i>			0	0	1	3
Long-crested Eagle	<i>Lophaetus occipitalis</i>			0	0	1	4
Crowned Eagle	<i>Stephanoaetus coronatus</i>			0	3	1	0
African Green Pigeon	<i>Treron calvus</i>			0	6	10	25
Tambourine Dove	<i>Turtur tympanistria</i>			29	38	47	35
Blue-spotted Wood Dove	<i>Turtur afer</i>			0	0	0	5
Eastern Bronze-naped Pigeon	<i>Columba delegorguei</i>			28	18	6	1
Lemon Dove	<i>Columba larvata</i>			4	4	0	0
Red-eyed Dove	<i>Streptopelia semitorquata</i>			0	1	1	6
Fischer's Turaco	<i>Tauraco fischeri</i>	NT	*	38	20	27	22
Barred Long-tailed Cuckoo	<i>Cercococcyx montanus</i>			7	2	0	0
African Emerald Cuckoo	<i>Chrysococcyx cupreus</i>			0	0	2	1
Klaas's Cuckoo	<i>Chrysococcyx klaas</i>			0	0	0	1
Yellowbill	<i>Ceuthmochares aereus</i>			3	0	0	0
White-browed Coucal	<i>Centropus superciliosus</i>			0	0	5	11
African Palm Swift	<i>Cypsiurus parvus</i>			0	0	1	0
Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>			0	0	2	0
Speckled Mousebird	<i>Colius striatus</i>			0	0	54	137
Bar-tailed Trogon	<i>Apaloderma vittatum</i>			15	2	0	0
Brown-hooded Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon albiventris</i>			0	0	7	5
Green Wood-hoopoe	<i>Phoeniculus purpureus</i>			0	0	2	1
Trumpeter Hornbill	<i>Bycanistes bucinator</i>			0	0	5	7
Silvery-cheeked Hornbill	<i>Bycanistes brevis</i>			113	109	87	64
White-eared Barbet	<i>Stactolaema leucotis</i>			4	4	41	51
Green Barbet	<i>Stactolaema olivacea</i>			93	79	79	33
Moustached Green Tinkerbird	<i>Pogoniulus leucomystax</i>			37	27	32	38
Scaly-throated Honeyguide	<i>Indicator variegatus</i>			5	7	5	7
Mombasa Woodpecker	<i>Campethera mombassica</i>			4	1	1	0
Olive Woodpecker	<i>Dendropicos griseocephalus</i>			0	0	0	1
Cardinal Woodpecker	<i>Dendropicos fuscescens</i>			1	0	3	10
African Broadbill	<i>Smithornis capensis</i>			20	7	0	0
Black Saw-wing	<i>Psaldoprocne pristoptera</i>			0	0	63	67

Lesser Striped Swallow	<i>Cecropis abyssinica</i>			0	0	1	14
Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>			0	0	1	0
Mountain Wagtail	<i>Motacilla clara</i>			0	1	5	0
African Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla aguimp</i>			0	0	4	3
Black Cuckoo-shrike	<i>Campephaga flava</i>			0	0	2	0
Grey Cuckoo-shrike	<i>Coracina caesia</i>			30	18	14	1
Shelley's Greenbul	<i>Andropadus masukuensis</i>			53	43	14	2
Stripe-cheeked Greenbul	<i>Andropadus milanjensis</i>			55	48	24	0
Little Greenbul	<i>Andropadus virens</i>			67	81	112	47
Yellow-bellied Greenbul	<i>Chlorocichla flaviventris</i>			0	0	0	1
Cabanis's Greenbul	<i>Phyllastrephus cabanisi</i>			14	13	8	0
Yellow-streaked Bulbul	<i>Phyllastrephus flavostriatus</i>			57	39	20	1
Tiny Greenbul	<i>Phyllastrephus debilis</i>			14	2	0	1
Common Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus barbatus</i>			3	21	172	217
Eastern Nicator	<i>Nicator gularis</i>			3	5	8	0
White-starred Robin	<i>Pogonocichla stellata</i>			0	0	2	0
Sharpe's Akalat	<i>Sheppardia sharpei</i>	*		16	8	0	0
White-browed Robin Chat	<i>Cossypha heuglini</i>			0	0	8	11
Common Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquatus</i>			0	0	20	3
White-chested Alethe	<i>Alethe fuelleborni</i>			25	19	8	0
Red-tailed Ant Thrush	<i>Neocossyphus rufus</i>			1	4	4	0
Orange Ground Thrush	<i>Zoothera gurneyi</i>			7	4	0	0
Usambara Thrush	<i>Turdus (olivaceus) roehli</i>	*		17	20	7	0
Kurrichane Thrush	<i>Turdus libonyanus</i>			0	0	0	4
Evergreen Forest Warbler	<i>Bradypterus lopezi</i>			9	32	15	6
Little Rush Warbler	<i>Bradypterus baboecala</i>			0	0	5	2
African Yellow Warbler	<i>Chloropeta natalensis</i>			0	0	4	12
Yellow-throated Woodland Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus ruficapilla</i>			43	36	13	1
Long-billed Tailorbird	<i>Artisornis moreaui</i>	CR	*	3	1	0	0
Red-faced Cisticola	<i>Cisticola erythrops</i>			0	0	37	85
Tawny-flanked Prinia	<i>Prinia subflava</i>			0	0	54	61
Black-headed Apalis	<i>Apalis melanocephala</i>			57	42	35	3
Grey-backed Camaroptera	<i>Camaroptera brachyura</i>			0	3	23	19
Southern Black Flycatcher	<i>Melaenornis pammelaina</i>			0	0	2	6
African Dusky Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa adusta</i>			8	8	30	10
White-tailed Crested Flycatcher	<i>Elminia albonotata</i>			38	40	5	1
African Paradise Flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone viridis</i>			36	28	24	4
Black-and-white Flycatcher	<i>Bias musicus</i>			0	0	1	2
Black-throated Wattle-eye	<i>Platysteira peltata</i>			0	0	4	1
Forest Batis	<i>Batis mixta</i>			22	6	0	2
Pale Batis	<i>Batis soror</i>			0	0	15	10
Pale-breasted Illadopsis	<i>Illadopsis rufipennis</i>			5	7	2	0
Arrow-marked Babbler	<i>Turdoides jardineii</i>			0	0	0	2
Spot-throat	<i>Modulatrix stictigula</i>		*	6	2	0	0
Dappled Mountain Robin	<i>Modulatrix orostruthus</i>	VU	*	1	0	0	0
Uluguru Violet-backed Sunbird	<i>Anthreptes neglectus</i>			2	2	14	16
Banded Sunbird	<i>Anthreptes rubritorques</i>	VU	*	6	9	33	29
Eastern Olive Sunbird	<i>Cyanomitra olivacea</i>			107	101	140	97
Amethyst Sunbird	<i>Chalcomitra amethystina</i>			0	0	4	22
Scarlet-chested Sunbird	<i>Chalcomitra senegalensis</i>			0	0	1	4
Collared Sunbird	<i>Hedydipna collaris</i>			24	20	85	50
Amani Sunbird	<i>Hedydipna pallidigastra</i>	EN	*	5	6	6	5
Purple-banded Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris bifasciatus</i>			0	0	30	78
Variable Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris venustus</i>			0	0	1	5
Yellow White-eye	<i>Zosterops senegalensis</i>			7	19	35	72
Common Fiscal	<i>Lanius collaris</i>			0	0	5	12



Black-fronted Bush-shrike	<i>Telophorus nigrifrons</i>			56	34	15	1
Sulphur-breasted Bush-shrike	<i>Telophorus sulfureopectus</i>			0	0	0	1
Brown-crowned Tchagra	<i>Tchagra australis</i>			0	0	6	7
Black-backed Puffback	<i>Dryoscopus cubla</i>			3	5	30	36
Tropical Boubou	<i>Laniarius aethiopicus</i>			0	3	10	20
Green-headed Oriole	<i>Oriolus chlorocephalus</i>			44	59	58	14
African Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus auratus</i>			0	0	3	13
Square-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus ludwigii</i>			73	53	34	1
Fork-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus adsimilis</i>			0	0	22	37
Kenrick's Starling	<i>Poeoptera kenricki</i>	*		0	0	21	52
Waller's Starling	<i>Onychognathus walleri</i>			19	25	63	55
Red-winged Starling	<i>Onychognathus morio</i>			0	0	0	1
Black-bellied Starling	<i>Lamprotornis corruscus</i>			1	3	88	121
Violet-backed Starling	<i>Cinnyricinclus leucogaster</i>			0	0	6	26
Baglafecht Weaver	<i>Ploceus baglafecht</i>			0	0	9	46
Spectacled Weaver	<i>Ploceus ocularis</i>			0	0	28	57
Dark-backed Weaver	<i>Ploceus bicolor</i>			39	38	31	4
Thick-billed Weaver	<i>Amblyospiza albifrons</i>			0	0	0	10
Yellow Bishop	<i>Euplectes capensis</i>			0	0	0	1
Green Twinspot	<i>Mandingoa nitidula</i>			0	1	0	0
Red-faced Crimsonwing	<i>Cryptospiza reichenovii</i>			3	2	5	3
Yellow-bellied Waxbill	<i>Estrilda quartinia</i>			0	0	22	45
Common Waxbill	<i>Estrilda astrild</i>			0	0	24	28
Red-headed Bluebill	<i>Spermophaga ruficapilla</i>			1	0	0	0
Red-throated Twinspot	<i>Hypargos niveoguttatus</i>			1	4	1	0
Bronze Mannikin	<i>Lonchura cucullata</i>			0	0	0	4
Black-and-white Mannikin	<i>Lonchura bicolor</i>			0	14	20	64
Pin-tailed Whydah	<i>Vidua macroura</i>			0	0	0	1
African Citril	<i>Serinus citrinelloides</i>			0	0	29	117
Cabanis's Bunting	<i>Emberiza cabanisi</i>			0	2	7	26
<b>Total</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1,390</b>	<b>1,265</b>	<b>2,079</b>	<b>2,254</b>

**Table 2.** Red-listed and restricted-range species, and their mean frequencies (number of individuals/point), in the four habitat types in the East Usambara Mountains (sample size: 354 point counts).

**Tableau 2.** Liste des espèces de la Liste Rouge et à répartition restreinte avec leur fréquence moyenne (nombre d'individus/point) dans les quatre types d'habitat des Usambaras orientales (taille de l'échantillonnage: 354 points de comptage).

Common name	Undisturbed forest	Disturbed forest	Edge	Smallholder agriculture	Overall average
Southern Banded Snake Eagle	0.05	0.01	0.03	0.02	0.03
Fischer's Turaco	0.45	0.25	0.27	0.24	0.30
Sharpe's Akalat	0.19	0.10	0.00	0.00	0.07
Usambara Thrush	0.20	0.25	0.07	0.00	0.13
Long-billed Tailorbird	0.04	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.01
Spot-throat	0.07	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.02
Dappled Mountain Robin	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Uluguru Violet-backed Sunbird	0.02	0.03	0.14	0.17	0.10
Banded Sunbird	0.07	0.11	0.33	0.32	0.22
Amani Sunbird	0.06	0.08	0.06	0.05	0.06
Kenrick's Starling	0.00	0.00	0.21	0.57	0.21

show that this species is abundant in the East Usambara submontane forest. It was most frequent in undisturbed forest, whilst in disturbed forest and farmland habitats it was noticeably rarer (Table 2). Nevertheless, turacos were regularly observed outside forest, even in very small patches of isolated trees, often planted by people, around watercourses and within the agricultural matrix.

#### **Sharpe's Akalat** *Sheppardia sharpei*

A restricted-range species endemic to the Eastern Arc. Rarely seen, but quite frequently heard (91% of 22 contacts) at altitudes ranging from 900 to 1,100 m. Similar to Newmark's (1991, 2006) findings, we recorded it only in forest, with frequencies in undisturbed forest almost twice those of disturbed forest (Table 2). The species appears to be highly sensitive to changes in forest quality.

#### **Usambara Thrush** *Turdus (olivaceus) roehli*

Although current systematics treat Usambara Thrush as a subspecies of the widespread Olive Thrush *T. olivaceus*, molecular analyses suggest that this taxon is better considered a separate species, endemic to the North Pare and Usambara mountains (Bowie *et al.* 2005). We agree with this, given the clear differences in both vocalisations and ecology compared to the northern (*abyssinicus*) races. In our survey, Usambara Thrush was observed in relatively good numbers (32 records), both in disturbed and undisturbed forest, more rarely at edges (Table 2); outside forest, the species was replaced by the congeneric Kurrichane Thrush *T. libonyanus*. Recent studies suggest that Usambara Thrush is undergoing a long-term decrease (Newmark 1991, 2006). Despite this trend, our data suggest that it is still relatively widespread in the study area, although it is confined to forest habitats.

#### **Long-billed Tailorbird** *Artisornis moreaui*

This Critically Endangered species is known only from the East Usambaras and from a single locality in northern Mozambique where it was recently rediscovered (Ryan & Spottiswoode 2003). During standardised counts we obtained only four records, but as we suspected this to be an underestimate—this species occurs in extremely densely vegetated habitats and can only be located when it sings, which does not occur frequently—we

undertook specific searches along the transects using playback. As a result, a further 28 territories were located within the study area (Fig. 2). Of these, 14 were at forest edge and 18 in forest interior. The number of territories located on the edge of, or within, disturbed forest was equal to those in undisturbed forest (16 vs. 16). Twelve of the 32 territories were along streams, whilst the rest were in large open gaps or at forest edge. In all cases, the canopy was open and the undergrowth was occupied by dense tangles of vines, climbers or *Lantana camara* (*Lantana* is invasive in this area).

Our data suggest that Long-billed Tailorbird is relatively widespread within the study area (see also Cordeiro *et al.* 2001). Previous estimates of extreme rarity might in part be due to the difficulty of observing the species, even when playback is used. The species might be sensitive to forest fragmentation, as it has been found in only two of 12 small forest fragments sampled since 2000 (NJC pers. obs.; see Newmark 1991), even when micro-habitat conditions appeared suitable (see McEntee *et al.* 2005). However, within forest, it is little affected by habitat degradation, as we often found it along powerline cuts and in gaps dominated by exotic shrubs. Long-billed Tailorbird selects early successional habitats (forest gaps with open canopy and dense undergrowth) and thus its conservation might hinge on recurrent disturbance (e.g., landslides, floods, treefalls, selective logging) that creates forest gaps of appropriate size.

#### **Spot-throat** *Modulatrix stictigula*

The genus *Modulatrix* is endemic to the Eastern Arc and comprises two species, both of which occur in the East Usambaras. Spot-throat was the more frequently recorded of the two, but numbers were still quite low. We obtained eight records (Fig. 2), all of singing birds in dense, closed-canopy forest at 880–1,020 m. It was recorded in both disturbed and undisturbed forest, but numbers were higher in undisturbed habitats (Table 2). As demonstrated by Newmark (1991, 2006), this species appears to be highly sensitive to relative forest quality in this region of the East Usambaras; further north, in Nilo Forest Reserve, it is more abundant in lightly degraded and more pristine forest at 1,100–1,400 m (Cordeiro 1998, Seddon *et al.* 1999a,b).



**Dappled Mountain Robin** *Modulatrix orostruthus*  
The rarer of the two *Modulatrix* species in our study area (see also Newmark 1991, 2006). We obtained just one record (Fig. 2), a singing individual heard on 26 September 2006, at 960 m, deep in undisturbed forest. Although numbers might have been under-estimated due to the species' skulking behaviour, Dappled Mountain Robin is certainly one of the rarest species in the East Usambaras and its total population might just be a few pairs. It is severely threatened within the study area (see also Newmark 1991).

**Uluguru Violet-backed Sunbird** *Anthreptes neglectus*

Previously listed as Near Threatened (Collar & Stuart 1985), this sunbird is currently treated as Least Concern (IUCN 2006). It was generally silent during our survey and, like Amani Sunbird, its abundance might have been under-estimated. The species was recorded, sometimes in groups of up to six, almost exclusively at edges and in agricultural habitats (Fig. 3), where it foraged in remnant forest trees (especially *Allanblackia stuhlmannii*) or in planted species (*Grevillea robusta*, *Cupressus lusitanica*). Twice we recorded it inside forest, where it joined mixed-species flocks. Its frequency in forest might have been under-estimated due to its silent behaviour: individuals can be detected only when they are very close. When systematically observing mixed-species flocks 200–600 m inside the forest, we frequently recorded this sunbird. In contrast, standardised census counts revealed fewer individuals (NJC unpubl.). A nest was found in a *Grevillea* tree, in a small village near the Derema tea estates, on 14 September 2006; other nests were found at the forest edge between September and December in multiple years (NJC unpubl.).

**Banded Sunbird** *Anthreptes rubritorques*

This restricted-range species, classified as Vulnerable (IUCN 2006), is endemic to the Eastern Arc Mountains of Tanzania. Its main stronghold is in the East Usambaras and the species appears to be uncommon in the other Eastern Arc forests (the Ngurus, Ulugurus, West Usambaras: Britton 1980). The species was usually easy to detect due to its frequently uttered, penetrating call, which carries more than 200 m. Banded Sunbird was observed in good numbers,

in all habitats, but with a clear preference for edges and smallholder agriculture with sufficient numbers of large trees (Table 2; Fig. 3). In September 2006 the species was very active and probably breeding: we observed several males singing from treetops and engaging in territorial behaviour. We found two nests, one under construction on a tree planted by the side of the road, in an open habitat near Amani village, on 19 September, and one active on a forest edge adjoining tea plantations on 22 December.

**Amani Sunbird** *Hedydipna pallidigastra*

This Endangered and restricted-range species (IUCN 2006) was contacted less frequently than Banded Sunbird. However, as its vocalisations are softer and less frequently uttered than those of Banded Sunbird, usually only individuals at close range were recorded. Amani Sunbird was observed with similar frequencies in all habitats (Table 2); however, it usually did not venture far into cultivated areas (maximum recorded distance from forest was c.800 m; Fig. 3). A nest was found by one of us (JJ) in a *Eucalyptus* plantation near Monga tea estate in 2004.

**Kenrick's Starling** *Poeoptera kenricki*

This restricted-range East African endemic was frequently recorded in flocks of up to 16 during the point counts, and even larger groups (up to 30) at other times. All observations were made in smallholder agriculture or at forest edges, and it was never observed in forest habitats. Although our data do not permit us to eliminate the possibility that Kenrick's Starling does at some seasons move toward the forest interior (NJC unpubl.), it would appear that the species is largely dependent on open, non-forest environments in the East Usambaras. However, elsewhere in this range (e.g. Nilo Forest Reserve: Cordeiro 1998, Seddon *et al.* 1999a,b; Mtai Forest Reserve: Evans & Anderson 1993), and in other Eastern Arc forests such as the Udzungwas, Ulugurus and Ngurus, Kenrick's Starling behaves as a true forest species (Stuart *et al.* 1987, Jensen & Brøgger-Jensen 1992, Romdal 2001). Because this starling can undertake extensive movements, and due to the species' preference for the canopy, it is possible that our sampling methods failed to sufficiently detect the species in dense forest. Longer-term data should provide a better assessment of this potential sampling bias.

## Discussion

We recorded six globally threatened species. Other globally threatened species known to occur in the area either prefer higher elevations (Usambara Weaver *Ploceus nicolli*), are very localised (Usambara Hyliota *Hyliota usambara*), or are nocturnal and not easily encountered using our survey techniques (Usambara Eagle Owl *Bubo vosseleri*).

The main result of this survey is that, in the East Usambaras, some threatened or restricted-range birds use human-modified habitats, at least for foraging, and sometimes also for nesting. All of the sunbirds, as well as Fischer's Turaco, Southern Banded Snake Eagle and Kenrick's Starling were regularly observed at forest edges and in agricultural areas where significant tree cover remained. Only ground-foraging species (Usambara Thrush, Sharpe's Akalat, Spot-throat, Dappled Mountain Robin) were never found outside forest.

Another, encouraging, result is that Long-billed Tailorbird was found to be relatively widespread in its very specialised habitat, when searched for using playback. Although at this early stage of our survey we are unable to produce reliable numerical estimates, we suspect that the species' population might be larger than the 150–200 individuals conservatively estimated by Cordeiro *et al.* (2001). Moreover, Long-billed Tailorbird appears to be resistant to disturbance, as we often found it in severely degraded habitats (e.g. along powerline cuts). Such disturbed areas often host *Lantana* bushes and remnant trees covered with vines; a habitat that is removed by the tea estates in favour of *Eucalyptus* plantations. This could be detrimental to populations and further efforts to verify this possibility will ensue shortly. Furthermore, our data, as well as previously published information (e.g. McEntee *et al.* 2005), reveal that this tailorbird inhabits gaps or edges within large patches of natural forest. This might represent a conservation problem, as the introduced tree *Maesopsis eminii* regenerates very rapidly within forest gaps and closes them in short time, swiftly making them unsuitable for the tailorbird. *Maesopsis* might therefore pose a severe threat not only to the tailorbird, but to all gap-selecting species.

Forest gaps are usually created and maintained by various types of physical disturbance, such as landslides, treefalls, tree-felling, floods or shifting agriculture. The habitat requirements of Long-

billed Tailorbird contrast with those of ground-foraging forest-interior birds, as the former appears to require a certain amount of habitat disturbance, whereas the latter are negatively affected by it. Current conservation strategies, which mainly focus on reducing or eliminating all types of disturbance from the forest, might not be favourable to this species. Further research to establish more accurately habitat selection by Long-billed Tailorbird is urgently needed in order to test this hypothesis.

An important finding is that within forest, species abundance and diversity are higher in undisturbed areas, rather than in disturbed forest where *Maesopsis eminii* is abundant. This agrees with the results of Newmark (2006), who already pointed out the reduced value of even slightly disturbed forest for terrestrial insectivores in the East Usambaras, results echoed by others for Congo-Kinshasa (Plumptre 1997), Amazonia (Stouffer *et al.* 2006) and Costa Rica (Şekercioglu *et al.* 2002). Our results therefore depict a complex situation and perhaps raise some important questions. In particular, the early stages of our monitoring programme revealed that traditional agricultural landscapes in the East Usambaras can often host surprisingly high numbers of species of conservation concern. We acknowledge that our survey technique mainly targeted foraging individuals and thus provides only an incomplete picture of the importance of agricultural zones vs. forest as a habitat for endangered birds. Clearly, a more complete evaluation would require an assessment of breeding success in different environments. However, we believe that our survey shows that edges and agricultural landscapes can be important at least as foraging sites for several species. Traditional agricultural areas now provide a varied environment, in which fields are intermixed with remnant forest trees and shrubland, where a rich avifauna can persist (Naidoo 2004, Bolwig *et al.* 2006). These habitats have probably been part of the landscape of the East Usambaras for centuries, but their physical structure is now to a large extent dependent on the vagaries of commercial markets and on nationwide political choices (Conte 1999). Any intensification leading to a reduction of tree cover or the substitution of the present mix of extensive polycultures with homogenous intensive monocultures will have detrimental effects on the avian assemblage, as we



observed in the tea plantations, where species diversity is extremely low.

Conservation of avian diversity in the East Usambaras might benefit from an increased attention toward rural landscapes, and we suggest that specific conservation programmes in the area could benefit if the larger landscape features of this entire habitat mosaic are considered. Such programmes could include initiatives to stimulate the use of useful indigenous species (such as *Allanblackia stuhlmannii*) in tree-planting near villages and houses. Moreover, economic incentives could be provided to stimulate more eco-compatible crops, such as coffee or cloves, rather than tea, as it is clear that intensive tea cultivations have no value to the local threatened fauna.

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<sup>a</sup>Department of Biological Sciences, University of Illinois at Chicago, 845 W Taylor St., 60607, Chicago, IL, USA. E-mail: lborgh2@uic.edu

<sup>b</sup>Wildlife Conservation Society of Tanzania, Box 70919, Dar es Salaam, and Department of Zoology & Wildlife Conservation, University of Dar es Salaam, PO Box 35064 Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

<sup>c</sup>Wildlife Conservation Society, Box 936, Iringa, Tanzania.

<sup>d</sup>Box 29, Amani, Tanga Province, Tanzania.

<sup>e</sup>Matembezi Ltd, PO Box 12929, Arusha, Tanzania.

<sup>f</sup>Botany Department, Field Museum of Natural History, 1400 S Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, IL, USA.

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# Données préliminaires sur l'avifaune aquatique de la Garaet Hadj-Tahar (Skikda, nord-est algérien)

Sophia Metallaoui <sup>a,b</sup> et Moussa Houhamdi <sup>a,c</sup>

**Preliminary data on waterbirds of the Garaet Hadj-Tahar (Skikda, north-east Algeria).** The results are presented of waterbird counts carried out weekly from August 2005 to February 2007 at the Garaet Hadj-Tahar, in north-east Algeria (36°51'N 07°15'E). In total, 52 species representing 15 families were recorded at this site, which is part of an Important Bird Area (IBA) and a Ramsar Site. Amongst the 11 breeding species, two are of conservation concern: White-headed Duck *Oxyura leucocephala*, classified as globally Endangered (up to 89 individuals present; three nests found), and Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca*, which is Near Threatened (27 breeding pairs, 14 nests found; 800 individuals wintering in November–December 2006). In winter, ducks are well represented (12 species, with a maximum of c.10,000 individuals in January 2007), as well as Common Coots *Fulica atra* (c.5,000 individuals).

**Résumé.** Nous présentons les résultats de recensements hebdomadaires de l'avifaune aquatique de la Garaet Hadj-Tahar (Skikda, nord-est algérien), réalisées d'août 2005 à février 2007. Nous avons recensé 52 espèces appartenant à 15 familles sur ce site, qui fait partie d'une Zone d'Importance pour la Conservation des Oiseaux (ZICO) et un Site Ramsar. Parmi les 11 espèces nicheuses, deux présentent un intérêt pour la conservation : l'Eristature à tête blanche *Oxyura leucocephala*, classée comme Menacée d'extinction, et le Fuligule nyroca *Aythya nyroca*, Quasi-menacé. Pendant la saison d'hivernage, les Anatidés sont fortement représentées (12 espèces, avec un maximum d'environ 10.000 individus en janvier 2007) ainsi que les Foulques macroules *Fulica atra* (près de 5.000 individus).

L'avifaune aquatique des zones humides algériennes a fait l'objet ces dernières années d'études par les chercheurs et les étudiants de 3<sup>e</sup> cycle du Laboratoire de Recherches des Zones Humides, depuis sa création à l'Université d'Annaba en 1990. Ces premiers travaux reposent sur les inventaires des effectifs fréquentant les écosystèmes aquatiques et sur l'étude de leur écologie (voir : Samraoui *et al.* 1992, Samraoui & De Belair 1997, 1998, Samraoui & Houhamdi 2001, Houhamdi & Samraoui 2001, 2002, 2003).

Cependant, des données précises et récentes ne sont disponibles que pour certains sites. Nous présentons ici les résultats préliminaires des dénombrements des oiseaux d'eau de la Garaet Hadj-Tahar (Skikda, nord-est algérien) et précisons le statut des espèces dans cette zone humide (le mot arabe 'garaet' désigne un plan d'eau vaste, riche en végétation et dont la profondeur ne dépasse pas 1,50 m). Nous attirons l'attention sur la nécessité de protection de cet écosystème en déterminant le rôle qu'il joue tout au long de l'année pour l'avifaune.

## Description du site

La Garaet Hadj-Tahar (36°51'N 07°15'E) est un plan d'eau douce de 500 ha qui fait partie du complexe de zones humides de la plaine de Guerbes-Sanhadja. Ce complexe, situé à environ 45 km à l'ouest de la ville d'Annaba, a été classé comme Site Ramsar en 2001 et sélectionné comme Zone d'Importance pour la Conservation des Oiseaux (Coulthard 2001). La Garaet Hadj-Tahar est située à environ 20 km de la côte et présente une forme ovale. La diversité floristique y est importante. Quelque 60–70% de la superficie totale sont occupés par *Nymphaea alba*, *Typha angustifolia*, *Phragmites australis*, *Scirpus maritimus*, *S. lacustris* et *Iris pseudoacacorus*. Le plan d'eau est bordé d'une ceinture de végétation composée principalement de *Juncus acutus*, *J. maritimus*, *Olea europea*, *Asphodelus aestivus*, *Rubus ulmifolius* et de pelouses de graminées dont les plus abondantes sont *Cynodon dactylon* et *Paspalum distichum* (Figs. 1–2). Les terres entourant le site sont utilisées pour la culture des céréales, principalement celle du blé dur *Triticum durum*. La profondeur moyenne de l'eau varie entre 0,80 et 1,20 m. Elle augmente



Figures 1–2. Vues générales de la Garaet Hadj-Tahar, 2 mars 2007 (Moussa Houhamdi)

Views of the Garaet Hadj-Tahar, 2 March 2007 (Moussa Houhamdi)

subitement suite aux pluies torrentielles, la garaet constituant une cuvette qui reçoit les ruissellements des eaux de pluies des montagnes environnantes. Le site joue un rôle important pour la reproduction et l'hivernage de certaines espèces d'oiseaux d'eau, notamment l'Erismature à tête blanche *Oxyura leucocephala*, classée comme Menacé d'extinction, et le Fuligule nyroca *Aythya nyroca*, Quasi-menacé (BirdLife International 2004), dont les effectifs dans la Garaet Hadj-Tahar augmentent depuis quelques années.

### Matériel et méthodes

Dans le but de recenser les oiseaux aquatiques fréquentant le site, de déterminer leur statut et d'étudier leur écologie, nous avons réalisé des sorties hebdomadaires d'août 2005 à février 2007. Pendant cette période, la profondeur de l'eau était de 1,0–1,50 m. Les dénombrements ont été effectués par nous-mêmes de 08h00 à 16h00, à l'aide d'une longue vue (20 × 45). Les groupes d'oiseaux de moins de 200 individus se trouvant à une distance inférieure à 200 m ont été dénombrés précisément ; pour les groupes plus importants et plus distants, les effectifs ont été estimés (Blondel 1975). Cette méthode est la plus employée dans les recensements hivernaux de l'avifaune aquatique (Lamotte & Bourlière 1969).

### Résultats

#### Podicipédidés

**Grèbe castagneux** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*—Nicheur sédentaire. Niche près des berges où plus d'une centaine de nids flottants, contenant 3–5 œufs, ont été trouvés dès le mois de mars. Les poussins

sont observés en crèches et demeurent sur le site jusqu'au mois de novembre.

**Grèbe huppé** *Podiceps cristatus*—Nicheur sédentaire. Reproduction de mars à juin. Des dizaines de nids, contenant en général 3–6 œufs, ont été trouvés dans les scirpes, phragmites et typhas, même très près des berges. Les poussins demeurent sur le site jusqu'au mois d'octobre.

**Grèbe à cou noir** *Podiceps nigricollis*—Hivernant rare (novembre–février). Maximum : 11 individus, le 16 novembre 2006.

#### Phalacrocoracidés

**Grand Cormoran** *Phalacrocorax carbo*—Visiteur de passage (octobre–février). Fréquente régulièrement le plan d'eau avec des effectifs ne dépassant pas dix individus. Semble attiré par la présence de la carpe d'eau douce *Cyprinus carpio*.

#### Ardéidés

**Bihoreau gris** *Nycticorax nycticorax*—Visiteur de passage (septembre–octobre). Trois observations de 3–7 individus sur les touffes de phragmites et de typhas du secteur septentrional.

**Crabier chevelu** *Ardeola ralloides*—Visiteur de passage. Effectifs faibles (5–20 individus), généralement en juillet–août, sur les touffes de phragmites.

**Héron garde-bœufs** *Bubulcus ibis*—Observé pratiquement toute l'année ; niche dans les zones humides limitrophes (Samraoui *et al.* 2007) et utilise le site pour s'y reposer. Effectifs les plus importants en juillet–août (3.000–4.000 individus).

**Aigrette garzette** *Egretta garzetta*—Observée toute l'année dans les zones vaseuses ; niche dans les



zones humides limitrophes. Effectifs les plus élevés pendant la période estivale : 112 oiseaux notés le 17 octobre 2006.

**Grande Aigrette** *Egretta alba*—Hivernant. Généralement solitaire et observée dans l'eau près des berges. Maximum : cinq individus, novembre 2006.

**Héron cendré** *Ardea cinerea*—Généralement solitaire et territorial ; observé toute l'année avec des effectifs faibles (5–21 individus) ; niche dans les zones humides limitrophes.

### Ciconiidés

**Cigogne blanche** *Ciconia ciconia*—Des centaines de nids sur les poteaux électriques et les toits des maisons des villages avoisinants la garaet. Fréquente tout le complexe des zones humides de Guerbes-Senhadja pour s'y nourrir, dès janvier et jusqu'en août. Maximum observé dans le site : neuf individus le 13 février 2007.

### Threskiornithidés

**Ibis falcinelle** *Plegadis falcinellus*—Visiteur de passage : 10–16 individus, octobre 2006–janvier 2007. Côté généralement les berges dégagées ; se tient rarement dans l'eau.

### Anatidés

**Canard siffleur** *Anas penelope*—Hivernant (octobre–mars). Maximum noté : 1.400 le 7 février 2007.

**Canard chipeau** *Anas strepera*—Hivernant (septembre–mars). Les effectifs augmentent progressivement pour atteindre leur maximum en décembre–janvier (1.560 individus en janvier 2007).

**Sarcelle d'hiver** *Anas crecca*—Hivernant (août–mars). Maximum noté : environ 1.200 individus le 18 octobre 2006.

**Canard colvert** *Anas platyrhynchos*—Nicheur sédentaire (27 couples) et hivernant. Niche sur les berges dans les touffes de scirpes et de joncs entourant le plan d'eau (neuf nids trouvés, contenant 9–12 œufs). En hiver, les effectifs atteignent plus de 500 individus suite à l'arrivée des populations hivernantes.

**Canard pilet** *Anas acuta*—Hivernant (fin octobre–début décembre). Maximum : 313 individus le 26 novembre 2006. Un petit effectif

de 17 individus a été observé pendant la migration prénuptiale en mars 2006.

**Sarcelle d'été** *Anas querquedula*—Une seule observation : trois individus le 11 août 2005.

**Canard souchet** *Anas clypeata*—Hivernant commun (septembre–mars). Maximum noté : 2.600 le 28 janvier 2007.

**Sarcelle marbrée** *Marmaronetta angustirostris*—Citée nicheuse par Boumezbeur (2001). Nous l'avons observé uniquement en juillet–octobre avec un effectif ne dépassant pas 42 individus.

**Fuligule milouin** *Aythya ferina*—Hivernant (septembre–mars). Maximum : 1.530 individus le 11 janvier 2007.

**Fuligule nyroca** *Aythya nyroca*—Nicheur sédentaire (27 couples) et hivernant. Niche dans les touffes de scirpes, de typhas et de phragmites (14 nids trouvés, contenant 10–13 œufs). En hiver, les effectifs augmentent. Maximum noté : 800 individus, entre novembre et décembre 2006.

**Fuligule morillon** *Aythya fuligula*—Hivernant (octobre–mars). Maximum : 63 oiseaux le 28 janvier 2007.

**Érismature à tête blanche** *Oxyura leucocephala*—Nicheur sédentaire (12–89 individus). À la fin de la saison d'hivernage, dix couples ont été recensés. Niche dans les touffes de scirpes et de phragmites en avril–juin (trois nids trouvés le 29 mai 2006, contenant 7–11 œufs).

### Accipitridés

**Balbuzard pêcheur** *Pandion haliaetus*—Visiteur occasionnel. Un ou deux individus observés en novembre–décembre. Ils ne demeurent sur le site que le temps de pêcher une carpe d'eau douce.

**Busard des roseaux** *Circus aeruginosus*—Nicheur sédentaire (trois couples).

### Rallidés

**Râle d'eau** *Rallus aquaticus*—Noté uniquement pendant la période hivernale (décembre–février) Maximum observé : deux individus, décembre 2006.

**Talève sultane** *Porphyrio porphyrio*—Nicheur sédentaire (trois couples). Deux nids ont été trouvés, contenant respectivement 4 et 6 œufs. Maximum observé : 11 individus le 6 novembre 2006.

**Gallinule poule-d'eau** *Gallinula chloropus*—Nicheur sédentaire. Effectif total estimé à une cen-

taine d'individus dont 24 couples nicheurs. Les 11 nids trouvés contenaient 4–6 œufs.

**Foulque macroule** *Fulica atra*—Nicheur sédentaire (24 couples) et hivernant. Les 27 nids trouvés contenaient 5–11 œufs. L'effectif total, estimé à une centaine d'individus, augmente substantiellement en hiver.

### Recurvirostridés

**Échasse blanche** *Himantopus himantopus*—Visiteur occasionnel : 3–7 individus, octobre–novembre 2006, sur les berges près des pelouses à *Cynodon dactylon*.

**Avocette élégante** *Recurvirostra avosetta*—Visiteur occasionnel : un groupe de sept individus en janvier 2007 dans les endroits vaseux encore en eau.

### Charadriidés

**Petit Gravelot** *Charadrius dubius*, **Grand Gravelot** *C. hiaticula*, **Gravelot à collier interrompu** *C. alexandrinus* et **Pluvier argenté** *Pluvialis squatarola*—Visiteurs occasionnels, mai–août. Généralement solitaires et observés sur les berges. **Vanneau huppé** *Vanellus vanellus*—Hivernant (octobre–mars). Maximum noté : 250 le 11 janvier 2007. Généralement en petits groupes sur les pelouses de graminées.

### Scolopacidés

Onze espèces : **Bécasseau minute** *Calidris minuta*, **Bécasseau cocorli** *C. ferruginea*, **Bécasseau variable** *C. alpina*, **Combattant varié** *Philomachus pugnax*, **Bécassine des marais** *Gallinago gallinago*, **Barge à queue noire** *Limosa limosa*, **Chevalier arlequin** *Tringa erythropus*, **Chevalier gambette** *T. totanus*, **Chevalier stagnatile** *T. stagnatilis*, **Chevalier aboyeur** *T. nebularia* et **Chevalier sylvain** *T. glareola*—Principalement observés au passage post- et prénuptial avec des effectifs n'excédant généralement pas 13 individus. Fréquentent les zones de balancement des eaux et les lieux dont la profondeur ne dépasse pas 10 cm.

### Laridés

**Mouette rieuse** *Larus ridibundus*—Visiteur occasionnel. Maximum observé : 14 oiseaux le 18 janvier 2007.

**Goéland leucophée** *Larus cachinnans michahellis*—Visiteur occasionnel rare. Maximum : sept individus le 15 décembre 2006.

### Sternidés

**Guifette moustac** *Chlidonias hybrida*—Estivante non nicheuse. Niche régulièrement avec des effectifs assez importants sur le Lac Tonga (36°51'N 08°30'E). Une vingtaine d'individus survolaient sans arrêt le plan d'eau pendant toutes nos sorties estivales. Maximum observé : 22 individus le 7 octobre 2006.

### Alcédinidés

**Martin-pêcheur d'Europe** *Alcedo atthis*—Nicheur sédentaire. Maximum observé : deux individus (probablement un couple).

### Discussion

Au total, 52 espèces appartenant à quinze familles, comprenant nicheurs, hivernants et visiteurs de passage, ont été observées durant la période de notre étude (Tab. 1). Parmi celles-ci, les Anatidés constitue la famille la mieux représentée en espèces et effectifs, avec un maximum d'environ 10.000 individus noté en janvier 2007, toutes espèces confondues. Les autres familles sont peu représentées, excepté celle des Scolopacidés qui égale celle des Anatidés en richesse spécifique mais demeure faiblement représenté en effectifs. Parmi la douzaine d'espèces nicheuses régulières à la Garaet Hadj-Tahar, deux présentent un intérêt pour la conservation : l'Érismature à tête blanche, classée comme Menacée d'extinction, et le Fuligule nyroca, Quasi-menacé (BirdLife International 2004). Bien que le complexe de zones humides de la plaine de Guerbes-Sanhadja ait été considéré comme le troisième en importance en Algérie en tant que site de reproduction pour l'Érismature à tête blanche, après le Lac Tonga et le Lac des Oiseaux, le nombre de nicheurs n'était pas précisé et un nid seulement avait été découvert en 1991 (Coulthard 2001). Nous avons constaté la présence d'un maximum de 89 individus et avons trouvé trois nids en 2006 et dix couples en 2007. Les sources précédant notre étude mentionnent la présence de plus de sept couples de Fuligules nyroca nicheurs, avec un seul nid trouvé, pour l'ensemble du complexe en 1991 (Coulthard 2001), tandis que nous avons compté 27 couples nicheurs et trouvé 14 nids à la seule Garaet Hadj-Tahar. Seulement 35 individus ont été rapportés comme hivernant en 1987 (Coulthard 2001) ; nous en avons observé 800 en novembre–décembre 2006. Nous avons également confirmé la présence



Tableau 1. Avifaune aquatique recensé à la Garaet Hadj-Tahar, août 2005–février 2007

Table 1. Waterbirds recorded at Garaet Hadj-Tahar, August 2005–February 2007

Espèce	Statut			Maximum observé		
	Nicheur sédentaire	Nicheur migrateur	Hivernant	Visiteur de passage	Nombre	Date(s)
<b>Podicipédidés</b>						
<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i> Grèbe castagneux	X				300	sept–nov 2006
<i>Podiceps cristatus</i> Grèbe huppé	X				100	7 oct 2006
<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i> Grèbe à cou noir			X		11	16 nov 2006
<b>Phalacrocoracidés</b>						
<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i> Grand cormoran				X	13	5 fév 2007
<b>Ardéidés</b>						
<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i> Héron bihoreau				X	7	4 sept 2006
<i>Ardeola ralloides</i> Héron crabier				X	21	7 oct 2006
<i>Bubulcus ibis</i> Héron garde-bœufs	X*				4.000	17 oct 2006
<i>Egretta garzetta</i> Aigrette garzette	X*				400	17 août 2006
<i>Egretta alba</i> Grande Aigrette			X		5	6 nov 2006
<i>Ardea cinerea</i> Héron cendré	X*				12	7 oct 2006
<b>Ciconiidés</b>						
<i>Ciconia ciconia</i> Cigogne blanche		X*			9	13 fév 2007
<b>Threskiornithidés</b>						
<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i> Ibis falcinelle				X	16	16 nov 2006
<b>Anatidés</b>						
<i>Anas penelope</i> Canard siffleur			X		1.400	7 fév 2007
<i>Anas strepera</i> Canard chipeau			X		1.560	28 jan 2007
<i>Anas crecca</i> Sarcelle d'hiver			X		1.200	18 oct 2006
<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i> Canard colvert	X		X		1.000	8 sept 2006
<i>Anas acuta</i> Canard pilet			X		313	26 nov 2006
<i>Anas querquedula</i> Sarcelle d'été				X	3	11 août 2005
<i>Anas clypeata</i> Canard souchet			X		2.600	28 jan 2007
<i>Marmaronetta angustirostris</i> Sarcelle marbrée				X	42	17 sept 2006
<i>Aythya ferina</i> Fuligule milouin			X		1.530	11 jan 2007
<i>Aythya nyroca</i> Fuligule nyroca	X		X		800	nov–déc 2006
<i>Aythya fuligula</i> Fuligule morillon			X		63	28 jan 2007
<i>Oxyura leucocephala</i> Érismature à tête blanche	X		X		89	11 jan 2007
<b>Accipitridés</b>						
<i>Pandion haliaetus</i> Balbuzard pêcheur				X	2	28 sept 2006
<i>Circus aeruginosus</i> Busard des roseaux	X				6	28 sept 2006
<b>Rallidés</b>						
<i>Rallus aquaticus</i> Râle d'eau			X		2	28 déc 2006
<i>Porphyrio porphyrio</i> Talève sultane	X				11	6 nov 2006
<i>Gallinula chloropus</i> Gallinule poule-d'eau	X				7.100	5 fév 2007
<i>Fulica atra</i> Foulque macroule	X		X		100	18 oct 2006
<b>Recurvirostridés</b>						
<i>Himantopus himantopus</i> Échasse blanche				X	5	4 sept 2006
<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i> Avocette élégante				X	7	18 jan 2007
<b>Charadriidés</b>						
<i>Charadrius dubius</i> Petit Gravelot				X	8	3 nov 2006
<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> Grand Gravelot				X	5	3 nov 2006
<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i> Gravelot à collier interrompu				X	3	26 nov 2006
<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> Pluvier argenté				X	1	26 nov 2006
<i>Vanellus vanellus</i> Vanneau huppé			X		250	11 jan 2007
<b>Scolopacidés</b>						
<i>Calidris minuta</i> Bécasseau minute				X	13	14 nov 2006
<i>Calidris ferruginea</i> Bécasseau cocorli				X	7	14 nov 2006
<i>Calidris alpina</i> Bécasseau variable				X	4	14 nov 2006
<i>Philomachus pugnax</i> Combattant varié				X	4	9 nov 2006
<i>Gallinago gallinago</i> Bécassine des marais				X	3	11 nov 2006
<i>Limosa limosa</i> Barge à queue noire				X	4	18 jan 2007
<i>Tringa erythropus</i> Chevalier arlequin				X	3	29 déc 2006
<i>Tringa totanus</i> Chevalier gambette				X	11	21 déc 2005
<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i> Chevalier stagnatile				X	5	21 déc 2005
<i>Tringa nebularia</i> Chevalier aboyeur				X	2	18 jan 2007
<i>Tringa glareola</i> Chevalier sylvain				X	2	18 jan 2007

## Laridés

*Larus ridibundus* Mouette rieuse

X

14

18 jan 2007

*Larus cachinnans* Goéland leucopnée

X

7

5 fév 2007

## Sternidés

*Chlidonias hybrida* Guifette moustac

X

22

7 oct 2006

## Alcedinidés

*Alcedo atthis* Martin-pêcheur d'Europe

X

2

sept 2006–jan 2007

\* Espèces nichants dans les zones humides limitrophes et utilisant la Garaet Hadj-Tahar pour s'y nourrir et se reposer

de la Talève sultane, espèce nicheuse très locale et généralement peu fréquente en Algérie (Isenmann & Moali 2000), dont nous avons trouvé deux nids.

Malheureusement, et malgré le statut dont jouit cette zone humide, la Garaet Hadj-Tahar attire des chasseurs et des braconniers (surtout des riverains) : nous en avons observé 4–5 dès le début de la saison d'hivernage. Nous voudrions lancer un appel aux responsables ainsi qu'aux riverains pour qu'ils assurent la protection intégrale de cette zone humide d'importance internationale.

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- <sup>a</sup> L.R.Z.H. Laboratoire de Recherche des Zones Humides, Université d'Annaba, Algérie.
- <sup>b</sup> Département de Biologie, Université de Skikda, Algérie. E-mail : sometlaoui@yahoo.fr
- <sup>c</sup> Département de Biologie, Université du 08 Mai 1945, Guelma, Algérie. E-mail : houhamdimoussa@yahoo.fr
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# On the ecology of Brown Nightjar *Veles binotatus* in West and Central Africa

Françoise Dowsett-Lemaire and Robert J. Dowsett

Sur l'écologie de l'Engoulevent à deux taches *Veles binotatus* en Afrique Occidentale et Centrale. Depuis l'identification de son chant en 1997 au Congo-Brazzaville (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 1998a), l'Engoulevent à deux taches *Veles binotatus* a été trouvé dans de nombreuses nouvelles localités, notamment au Cameroun, au Ghana et en Sierra Leone. Cet engoulevent guinéo-congolais fréquente tout aussi bien les forêts ombrophiles sempervirentes que les forêts semi-sempervirentes à voûte ouverte, mais avec des densités variables. Il est assez localisé dans la deuxième catégorie, mais peut être très commun dans certains types de forêt sempervirente (par ex. Kakum National Park au Ghana, la forêt de Gola au Sierra Leone), pour autant que la voûte présente de petites ou moyennes trouées, comme dans les forêts exploitées sélectivement. Certains territoires contiennent des ruisseaux avec éventuellement des lambeaux de forêt à *Raphia*, mais l'espèce semble absente des forêts marécageuses de grande étendue. Normalement les oiseaux chantent perchés dans la végétation, souvent à des hauteurs de 10–20 m (parfois plus bas), et chassent dans les petites trouées depuis le sous-bois jusqu'à la voûte.

**Summary.** Since the identification of its song in 1997 in Congo-Brazzaville, Brown Nightjar *Veles binotatus* has been found in many new locations, especially in Cameroon, Ghana and Sierra Leone. This Guineo-Congolian nightjar frequents both evergreen and semi-evergreen rain forest, but at varying densities. It is rather local in the latter, but may be very common in certain evergreen forest types (e.g. in Kakum National Park, Ghana, and in Gola Forest, Sierra Leone), provided the forest presents small or medium-sized gaps, such as those occurring in selectively logged forests. Certain territories contain streams with, occasionally, patches of *Raphia* palms, but the species appears to be absent from large swamp or flooded forests. Normally, birds sing from a perch in vegetation, often at heights of 10–20 m, occasionally lower, and hunt in small gaps, from the understorey to the canopy.

The Brown Nightjar *Veles binotatus* remains a poorly known species, although its range is much wider than that of the other two forest species confined to Central Africa, Bates's Nightjar *Caprimulgus batesi* and Itombwe Nightjar *C. prigoginei*, as it occurs in both Upper and Lower Guinea, from Sierra Leone (Lindsell *et al.* 2008, this paper) east to Congo-Kinshasa (Fry *et al.* 1988). There are very few specimens and its voice was identified for certain only in May 1997, when we undertook a specific nightjar survey in the rain forests of Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park, Congo-Brazzaville, and mist-netted a singing bird (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 1998a). Since then we have come across the species at several localities in Cameroon, Ghana and Sierra Leone, and have acquired a better understanding of the forest types favoured by this nightjar. From the few specimens known, it appeared to be present in both the evergreen and semi-evergreen forest zones of the

Guineo-Congolian rain forest region, but it is only since the bird could be located by voice that more was learned of its ecology. We present here an update of the species' ecological preferences, as we understand them, from observations made in 1997–2007.

## Congo-Brazzaville

In northern Congo-Brazzaville (Nouabalé-Ndoki; 02°30'N 16°30'E), the main forest type is open-canopy semi-evergreen in dryland situations. The distribution of Brown Nightjar was rather patchy, with territorial pairs occupying areas where the canopy was not too open (c.50% cover or more), but apparently avoiding areas with completely closed canopy; territories were at intervals of at least 500 m, more frequently 750–1,000 m (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 1998a). One bird was also located by a stream at the ecotone between mono-dominant *Gilbertiodendron dew-*

*evrei* forest and swamp forest with some *Raphia*. *Gilbertiodendron* forest is evergreen with a closed canopy, but there were some gaps in the swamp forest. Some birds sang spontaneously from perches in vegetation 10–20 m high. The one bird we mist-netted was very aggressive and sang both in flight and when perched (in response to playback), at heights of 6–10 m, and once low enough to be caught. It was seen feeding between trees and over the narrow forestry track, at heights of a few metres.

Cameroon

Brown Nightjars were found in several locations in the south-east, in Lobéké (02°09'–02°19'N 15°44'E), Boumba-Bek (02°32'N 15°05'E) and Nki Reserves (02°12'N 14°39'E) (all now gazetted national parks), on three visits in the dry seasons of 1997–99 (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 1998b, 1999a). Three nightjars were located in isolated territories, but in two cases two singing birds were heard in the area, with an inter-territorial distance of 1.5 km (Boumba-Bek) or c.500 m (Lobéké). Six territories were in tall open-canopy semi-evergreen forest (some near small streams); one was in a mixture of semi-evergreen and evergreen rain forest (Nki), with patches of evergreen forest and a closed subcanopy at 16–18 m, overtopped by very tall trees of 40–50 m. A pair that responded to tape playback (Lobéké) perched at heights of only

a few metres either side of the observer, and apparently both members of the pair sang, although in one of them (the female?) the song was less sustained and the series of notes shorter.

In western Cameroon, we made extensive investigations from Mt. Cameroon and Bakossi east to Bamenda and south to the Yabassi hills in 1998–2001, but the species must be very rare as we found it only on Mt. Nlonako (04°55'N 09°59'E), in primary evergreen rain forest, with one bird singing at 1,150–1,200 m (February 1999: Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 1999b). This was in 25–30 m tall, pristine forest, and the altitude is the highest recorded for the species, as also for some others of lowland tropical forest (e.g. Congo Serpent Eagle *Dryotriorchis spectabilis* and Maned Owl *Jubula letti*). This was on the eastern (drier) side of the mountain and it is probable that the species generally avoids the rain-facing slopes and very wet conditions of most of western Cameroon.

Ghana

In the dry season of 2004–05 we undertook surveys of all wildlife reserves in the country, including several forested areas in the south-west (Ankasa, Kakum and Bia National Parks, and forest reserves at Cape Three Points, Atewa Range, Krokosua Hills, Ayum/Subim). We found Brown Nightjars in four of them, with exceptional densi-

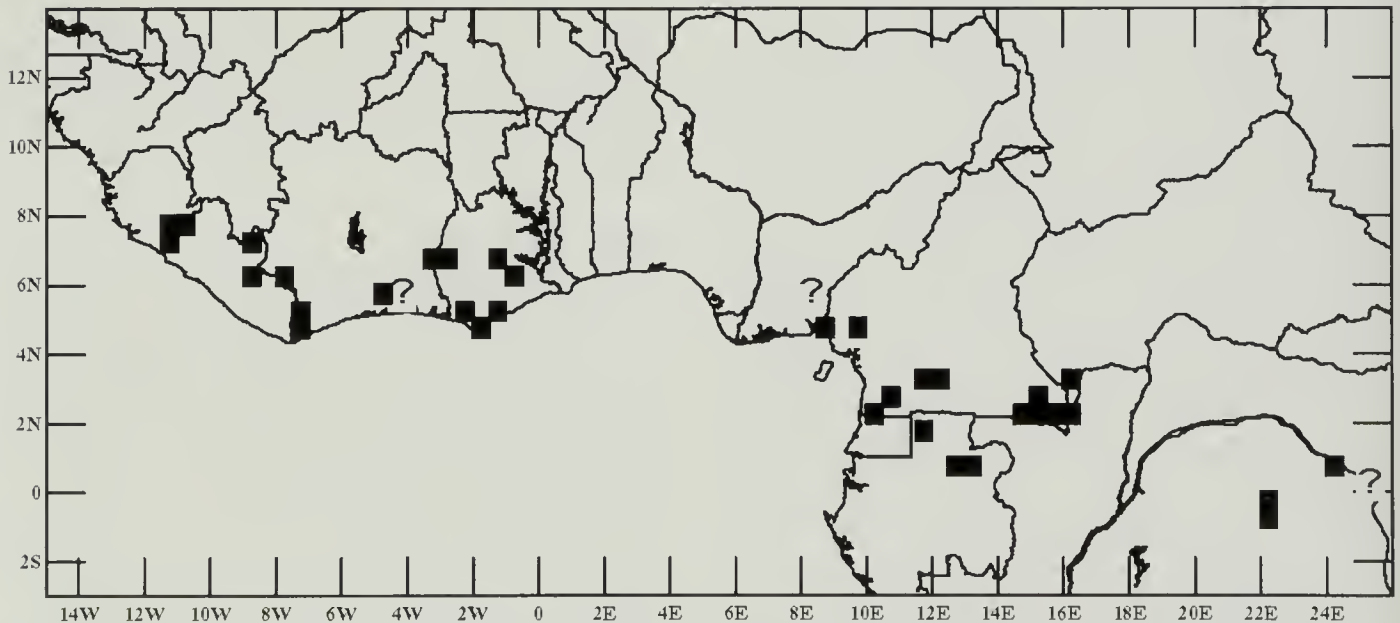


Figure 1. The distribution of Brown Nightjar *Veles binotatus*, updated since Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett (1998a).  
Carte de distribution de l'Engoulevent à deux taches *Veles binotatus*, remise à jour depuis Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett (1998a).



ties at Kakum (05°22'N 01°21'W) (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2005). The forest at Kakum falls within the evergreen rain forest zone (Hall & Swaine 1976), but had been logged selectively over many years, and as a result the canopy has many gaps. We visited only the southern and western edges of Kakum National Park, in areas where this phenomenon is pronounced and the densities of Brown Nightjar may reach well over 10 pairs/km<sup>2</sup>. In all four areas where we camped or walked at night, we heard no fewer than two Brown Nightjars sing, and distances between neighbours were of just 100–200 m. Near the tourist centre, we located four different singing birds in an area as small as 15–20 ha. Around the canopy walkway Brown Nightjars sang and fed over the understorey at heights reaching 20–35 m.

Elsewhere in south-western Ghana the species is far more local. We found one bird singing in Bia National Park (06°37'N 03°03'W) and another in the Krokosua Hills (06°37'N 02°51'W), in an area clearly dominated by semi-evergreen rain forest, with an open canopy. At both locations however, the calling bird was perched in a section of forest where the canopy was much denser than elsewhere. In Atewa Range (06°14'N 00°34'W), one bird was feeding on the top ridge (c.700 m) in evergreen rain forest with some small gaps, the product of both selective logging and the gradient. It gave one song note on take-off at dusk and disappeared, flying a few metres over the forest path.

### Sierra Leone

We visited Gola Forest for five weeks in January–February 2007. We camped at seven main locations in the reserve, and found Brown Nightjars in six of them, four of them in Gola North (c.07°40'N 11°03'–10°51'W). Thus the species is more widespread and common than implied by Lindsell *et al.* (2008). At Sileti camp (07°22'N 11°16'W), at the junction between Gola West and Gola East, at least five different birds were located, and from the camp itself it was possible to hear as many as three different birds calling simultaneously; two were only a few hundred metres distant, with a third much further. The bird nearer our tent sang from a perch in dense vegetation 15–20 m high. Playback apparently provoked some longer songs, the bird changing perches to a nearby tree, but always

remaining inside the forest. The rate of singing was apparently the same before and after playback, i.e. nearly one note per second (11 in 14 seconds before, 15 in 15 and 21 in 24 seconds after playback). Lindsell *et al.* (2008) recorded a slower rate of 10 notes in 22 seconds in Gola North, from a bird not responding to playback. No amount of playback brought the Sileti bird into the artificial clearing. The forest type in Gola is evergreen rain forest, most of which had been selectively logged. At one site, near Lalehun, a bird occupied an area that had been both logged and replanted with indigenous tree species: the result was a broken canopy with many small gaps. There were narrow strips of *Raphia* palms along some streams, and some birds were not far from these, but the main part of any territory was in dryland rain forest.

### Data from the literature

Few details on feeding or other behaviour can be found in the literature, but three sources warrant citation. In an area of evergreen rain forest in north-east Gabon, Brosset & Erard (1986) reported a bird caught by mammalogists in a mist-net in primary forest, at a height of 20 m, below the canopy. On other occasions this small nightjar was also seen flying below the canopy or in small or large clearings caused by treefalls in forest, and flying over the canopy.

In lowland rain forest in northern Liberia, S. Keith and A. D. Forbes-Watson (in Fry *et al.* 1988: 159) saw one bird 'hawking for insects in and just above the forest canopy at dusk; it made short sallies, always returning to same perch (the top of a vine-clad stump c.20 m up tree)'.

In the extreme south of Central African Republic, Carroll & Fry (1987) reported a Brown Nightjar apparently sitting on a nest, on the rachis of a *Raphia* palm frond, as the bird was approached to within 2 m and did not fly. The defensive gaping, the scatter of bird faeces on the palm leaf and other details suggested it was brooding young. This observation occurred on 10 March 1986 in selectively logged semi-evergreen rain forest on the edge of a *Raphia* swamp. Unfortunately the height of the arched palm leaf on which the bird was perched was not mentioned—from the way it was approached, one can guess it was perhaps between 1 m and 3 m.

## Calling season

Brown Nightjars appear to have an extended calling season, though it may be generally confined, as in most nightjars, to the dry season, when most of our field work took place. In south-east Cameroon and adjacent northern Congo-Brazzaville, we visited overall from late November to May. The single dry season starts in December and lasts until March or April. Heavy rain does not start until June or July. No Brown Nightjars were singing in November (Boumba-Bek), and singing commenced in the first week of December. In 1997 vocal activity appeared higher in April than May, and the bird mist-netted in mid May was halfway through primary moult. In Ghana the main dry season is from December to March: birds were very vocal in December–January, much less so in February–March (this was striking in two visits to Kakum, the activity in December being many times greater than in late March). In Gola Forest, Sierra Leone, birds were very vocal in late January, singing for long spells each night, but much less so in late February, in similarly clear, moonlit nights, when birds were heard briefly on only three of nine nights on 18–27 February.

## Discussion

Although Brown Nightjars occupy both major forest types (evergreen and semi-evergreen) of the Guineo-Congolian region, they occur at varying densities. Occupied territories in the open canopy of semi-evergreen rain forest are rather patchy. In some places, at least, birds seem to prefer areas with denser canopy (e.g. Bia, Krokosua). Highest densities are clearly achieved in evergreen rain forest, as in Kakum and Gola, but in both of these locations the forest had been logged and the resulting architecture presented many gaps. In Ankasa, in extreme south-west Ghana, the forest canopy is much more uniformly closed, and Brown Nightjar has not yet been confirmed to occur, and if it does, the species must be rare (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2005). Canopy gaps in selectively logged evergreen forest are smaller than in the naturally open semi-evergreen forest. Often, occupied territories include a stream, and a few Brown Nightjars may inhabit the edge of swamp or riverine forest with *Raphia* palms. However, the vast expanses of swamp or flooded forest that exist in Congo-Brazzaville appear to be avoided. Bates's Nightjar, on the

other hand, may be common in swamp or flooded forest (as in the Kouilou basin: Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 1991), though it can also be found in dryland rain forest, especially under a closed canopy (as in Odzala National Park: Dowsett-Lemaire 1997).

These observations are of course based on the position of singing birds and conclusions are at best tentative; further investigations will need to determine the size of territories and heights of feeding more accurately. Only radio-location of marked birds will make this possible.

Feeding ecology is at present very difficult to study, but birds apparently fly or feed over a wide vertical range in small gaps within forest, from a few metres above the ground (small clearings, forest paths) to the canopy, with several observations of birds feeding (one mist-netted in Gabon) at heights of 20 m or more. Large artificial clearings, as at Sileti, seem to be avoided. Most birds sing perched, often at heights of 10–20 m; birds aroused by playback may sing in flight over the recorder/observer and on lower perches at 6–10 m. Savanna nightjars nest on the ground, but the one possible nest found in Central African Republic was on a palm frond. A similar situation was described for Collared Nightjar *C. enarratus* in Madagascar (small palm or in a fork of a tree up to 20 m above ground), which is also a forest species (Dhondt 1976, Morris & Hawkins 1998).

Our knowledge of the distribution of Brown Nightjar has improved (compare Fig. 1 with the map in Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 1998a), although coverage remains very poor in under-explored countries like Gabon and Congo-Kinshasa, and it is surprisingly still unknown from Nigeria—we do not find convincing the sight record from the south-east (Burton 2006), indicated by '?' on the map, as the insufficient details of a bird seen under poor conditions do not eliminate a female of some other species (e.g. Long-tailed Nightjar *C. climacurus*). We have never seen a Brown Nightjar on a road, whereas savanna species do rest there, even in the forest zone.

In addition to our own records mentioned above, several 'new' sites have been discovered. For Côte d'Ivoire, Taï, Cavally and Haute-Dodo have been added on the basis of reliable observations by N. Borrow (*in litt.* and in *Bull. ABC* 8: 148) and R. Demey and H. Rainey (*in Bull. ABC* 9: 144); we doubt the report from Yapo (? on map), listed



without details by Gartshore *et al.* (1995) and already questioned by Demey (1996)—it had not been found by Demey & Fishpool (1994). For Liberia we have added ‘Liberian Timber Co.’ (i.e. near Yoezon) (Louette 1990); for Ghana we have also included Bobiri Forest Reserve (A. Riley in *Bull. ABC* 11: 174); for Cameroon, Ebianemeyong, Campo (R. Demey in *Bull. ABC* 6: 152); and for Gabon, the Liboumba River, 35 km from Makokou (N. Borrow in *Bull. ABC* 7: 74). The fourth, uncertain, record from Congo-Kinshasa (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 1998a) is untraced (? on map).

The species can be qualified as locally common: in Gola this is also reflected by the fact that the peculiar song notes of Brown Nightjar are part of the imitative repertoire of Shining Drongo *Dicrurus atripennis*! One must even be cautious not to confuse the two, as the drongos often give these sharp, spaced notes in the first light of dawn. In western Cameroon we also heard Grey Parrots *Psittacus erithacus* imitate Brown Nightjar at a roost near Yingui (04°30’N 10°20’E), though we did not find the nightjar in the vicinity.

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Le Pouget, 30440 Sumène, France. E-mail: Dowsett@aol.com

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# First record of Brown Nightjar *Veles binotatus* for Sierra Leone

Jeremy Lindsell<sup>a</sup>, Erik Klop<sup>b</sup> and Alhaji Siaka<sup>c</sup>

Première mention de l'Engoulevent à deux taches *Veles binotatus* pour la Sierra Leone. Un Engoulevent à deux taches *Veles binotatus* a été entendu et brièvement vu dans la Réserve forestière de Gola Nord, au sud-est de la Sierra Leone, le 9–11 février 2006. Le chant a été enregistré et ressemble à ceux de l'espèce connus d'ailleurs en Afrique de l'Ouest. Ceci constitue la première mention de cet engoulevent pour le pays.

**B**rown Nightjar *Veles binotatus* is a poorly known forest species of West and Central Africa. It is patchily distributed in the Lower Guinea forests of west and southern Cameroon, Gabon, Central African Republic and Congo-Brazzaville, and is even less well known from the Upper Guinea forests, with records in Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia (Borrow & Demey 2001, 2004). The westernmost records include one from Mt. Nimba (Colston & Curry-Lindahl 1986) and another 135 km south of Nimba, at  $c.06^{\circ}16'N$   $08^{\circ}40'W$  (Louette 1990). The voice was only described with certainty in 1998 (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 1998). We report here a record from Gola Forest, south-east Sierra Leone, which is the first for the country (Dowsett 1993) and extends the known range  $c.250$  km west.

Gola Forest is the largest remaining tract of Upper Guinea forest in Sierra Leone. Covering an area of  $c.750$  km<sup>2</sup>, the forest is contiguous with a larger area across the border in Liberia. An avifaunal survey undertaken in the late 1980s produced a list of 274 species (Allport *et al.* 1989), which included the majority of the Upper Guinea forest endemics (Stattersfield *et al.* 1998) and a large proportion of the Guinea-Congo forest species known from Upper Guinea. Some species have since been added to the list (pers. obs.) but, until now, none was new for the country.

## Description

On 9 February 2006 around 20.00 hrs, AS heard an unfamiliar vocalisation near a temporary camp ( $07^{\circ}39'N$   $10^{\circ}56'W$ ), in a small clearing of  $c.200$  m<sup>2</sup> created by former logging activity, adjacent to a small stream 1–2 m wide, within Gola North Forest Reserve. The forest was intact but with a broken canopy. On consulting the Chappuis

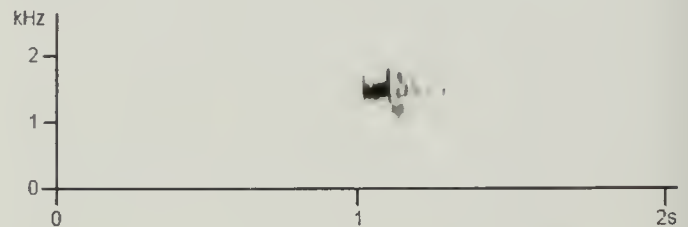


Figure 1. Sonogram of a single note from a Brown Nightjar *Veles binotatus* song, Gola Forest Reserve, Sierra Leone, February 2006. The structure of the note is clear and is very similar to that described for the species by Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett (1998) from Cameroon, Congo and Côte d'Ivoire.

Sonogramme d'une note du chant de l'Engoulevent à deux taches *Veles binotatus*, Réserve forestière de Gola, Sierra Leone, février 2006. La structure de la note est claire et très semblable à celle décrite pour l'espèce par Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett (1998) du Cameroun, du Congo et de la Côte d'Ivoire.

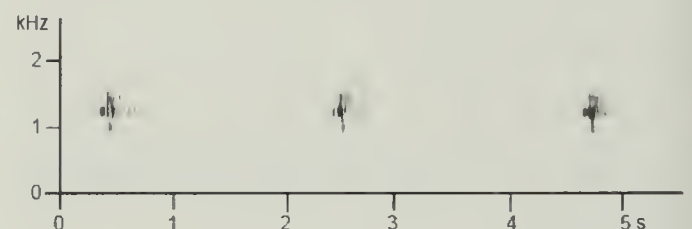
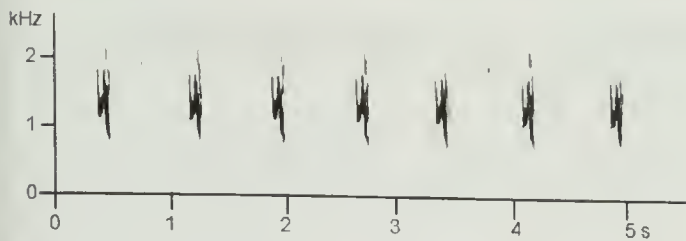


Figure 2. Sonogram of the song of a distant Brown Nightjar *Veles binotatus*, Gola North Forest Reserve, Sierra Leone, February 2006. The structure of the notes is slightly compressed but the timing is evident, at just over one per two seconds, and thus similar to the timing shown in Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett (1998) for a bird in Côte d'Ivoire recorded by M. Gartshore.

Sonogramme du chant de l'Engoulevent à deux taches *Veles binotatus*, Réserve forestière de Gola Nord, Sierra Leone, février 2006. Bien que la structure des notes soit un peu comprimée, il est clair que les notes sont émises à raison d'environ une note toutes les deux secondes, ce qui est semblable à la vitesse d'un chant de Côte d'Ivoire enregistré par M. Gartshore (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 1998).





**Figure 3.** Sonogram of Brown Nightjar *Veles binotatus* song from Ghana (Chappuis 2000). The notes are delivered at a rate of just under one per second, about twice the speed of the bird recorded in Gola Forest.

Sonogramme du chant d'un Engoulevent à deux taches *Veles binotatus* enregistré au Ghana (Chappuis 2000). Les notes sont émises à raison d'un peu plus d'une note par seconde, soit environ deux fois plus rapidement que les notes du chant enregistré dans la Réserve forestière de Gola.

(2000) recordings, AS readily identified the song as belonging to Brown Nightjar. EK then realised that he had heard the same song near another camp, c.35 km to the south-west (07°23'N 11°11'W), in Gola East, on 21 January 2006. Playback failed to elicit any response and no further song was heard that day. Next day the bird sang again c.1 hour before dawn and a brief recording was obtained. Again, the bird did not appear to respond to either the playback of its own voice or the Chappuis recording. It sang again just before dawn on 11 February, when another brief recording was made and, on playback, JL observed a nightjar swoop low overhead. No further singing was heard. The position of the bird whilst it was singing could not be determined.

The song consisted of short yelps, descending in pitch, *killop* or *ki-op*, described as *kliou* by Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett (1998). The sonogram of a single note is shown in Fig. 1. Notes were regularly spaced in series' of 5–10 notes. One series of ten notes was delivered at a rate of one per 2.2 seconds (three notes are shown in Fig. 2). A sonogram of a recording by Chappuis (2000) is presented in Fig. 3 for comparison. All sonograms were produced with Raven Lite 1.0 software (Cornell Lab of Ornithology). We only noted this individual sing on a total of five occasions during the two evenings and two mornings that we were present at the site.

### Discussion

The note was similar to the recording by Chappuis (2000), but the call rate was noticeably slower. A

rate of one per second was noted by Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett (1998), with a higher rate when agitated. The individual we encountered was unresponsive to playback, unlike those reported by Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett (1998) and Chappuis (2000).

Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett (1998) find the call very peculiar—rather reminiscent of an *Epomops* bat and quite unlike that of any of the churring or whistling species of nightjars. They also highlight the morphological distinctness of the species, which could justify its removal to a monotypic genus (*Veles* being available), a step taken by Cleere (2001) and also followed here. However, it is unclear in which category Bates's Nightjar *C. batesi*, Freckled Nightjar *C. tristigma* and Nubian Nightjar *C. nubicus* would fall under such an arrangement, none of which has churring or whistling songs. Chappuis (2000) also subdivides the African nightjars into two groups: those with whistling phrases or clearly separated notes, and those with trills. Under this arrangement, the first category encompasses such varied songs as those of Freckled and Mountain Nightjars *C. poliocephalus*, and therefore seems less useful. Fry (1988) groups Freckled and Nubian Nightjars largely on the basis of voice but does not treat Bates's and Brown Nightjar as their voices were then undescribed. However, he refers to the voice of what may have been Bates's Nightjar described by Chapin, likening it to the Freckled Nightjar group, and this similarity has been noted by others since (Borrow & Demey 2001, Stevenson & Fanshawe 2002). We consider that Brown Nightjar also has greatest vocal affinities with this group, having neither a whistling nor a churring song, but one that can be described as a yelp or bark.

### Acknowledgements

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- <sup>a</sup>RSPB, The Lodge, Sandy, Beds. SG19 2DL, UK. E-mail: [jeremy.lindsell@rspb.org.uk](mailto:jeremy.lindsell@rspb.org.uk)
- <sup>b</sup>RSPB, The Lodge, Sandy, Beds. SG19 2DL, UK. E-mail: [eklop@cs.com](mailto:eklop@cs.com)
- <sup>c</sup>CSSL, PO Box 1292, Freetown, Sierra Leone. E-mail: [alhajisiaka@yahoo.com](mailto:alhajisiaka@yahoo.com)

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# Madagascar Swamp Warbler *Acrocephalus newtoni* far from a swamp

Friederike Woog

Rousserolle de Newton *Acrocephalus newtoni* loin d'un marais. Deux Rousserolles de Newton *Acrocephalus newtoni* ont été capturées sur le sommet d'une colline à végétation sèche et dégradée à Maromizaha, à l'est de Madagascar. L'espèce, qui est largement répandue sur l'île, fréquente normalement des peuplements de *Cyperus* ou *Phragmites* et des arbres ou buissons près de marais et mangroves. Les mensurations des deux oiseaux et une courte description de la végétation du site sont présentées. Des données supplémentaires sur la présence de l'espèce loin de marais contribueraient à élucider ses exigences écologiques.

The Madagascar Swamp Warbler *Acrocephalus newtoni* is widespread on Madagascar and usually found in *Cyperus* or *Phragmites* stands, or in trees or scrub near marshes or mangroves (Morris & Hawkins 1998, Sinclair & Langrand 1998). It has relatively large feet which permit the birds to grasp larger reeds or branches. In other *Acrocephalus* there is a strong correlation between morphology and environment (Leisler *et al.* 1989). However, a population of *A. newtoni* is known from low ericoid thicket (a vegetation structure dominated by Asteraceae and Ericaceae: Gautier & Goodman 2003) above the treeline, in the Andringitra Massif, at 2,050 m. The birds at this location are genetically and morphologically very similar to marsh-dwelling birds (Goodman *et al.* 2000). Nonetheless, occurrence away from swamps is apparently uncommon and thus noteworthy.

On 13 December 2005, I caught two Madagascar Swamp Warblers at the north-west edge of Maromizaha, a private rainforest reserve near Andasibe, Perinet, eastern Madagascar (Fig. 1). The site is usually dry and is within an open, degraded hilltop near a quarry (18°57'S 48°27'E; 1,100 m). Large trees are nowadays

absent and introduced grasses, herbs and shrubs, e.g. *Lantana camara*, *Solanum mauritianum*, *Clidemia hirta* and *Psidia altissima*, prevail. Vegetational structure is relatively open with bare soil in places. The site is surrounded by patches of *Eucalyptus* of varying age, except for a moderately logged but otherwise intact primary forest that lies c.500 m distant, to the south-east. The birds could only have reached the site through or over the forest (unlikely), along the dirt road or via the *Eucalyptus* forest.

In December 2005 the site was slightly flooded following heavy rainfall (temporary puddles with c.10 cm of standing water), inducing some frogs to call. In September–November of 2003, 2004 and 2006 we never observed flooding at the site, nor frogs nor *A. newtoni*. It is very unlikely that we overlooked the species as our surveys were detailed.

Morphometrics (Table 1), photographs and a blood sample were taken. Mensural data for the bill (from base of skull to bill tip and from distal end of nostril) and wing (max. chord), were commensurate with those published by Goodman *et al.* (2000), except for tarsus which was measured differently (here: metatarsal bone or 'minimum' tar-

Table 1. Morphometrics of two Madagascar Swamp Warblers *Acrocephalus newtoni* caught at Maromizaha, eastern Madagascar, in December 2005.

Tableau 1. Mensurations de deux Rousserolles de Newton *Acrocephalus newtoni* capturées à Maromizaha, Madagascar de l'est, en décembre 2005.

Ring number (SAFRING)	Wing	3rd primary	Tarsus	Weight	Bill Length*	Bill height*	Bill width*	Bill-skull
FA68162	66	49	25	15.9	10.2	3.2	3.6	18.8
FA68163	70	52.5	25.3	17.9	9.3	3.2	3.0	18.1

\* = taken from distal edge of nostril.



Figure 1. Madagascar Swamp Warbler *Acrocephalus newtoni* caught at Maromizaha, eastern Madagascar, 13 December 2005 (Friederike Woog)

Rousserolle de Newton *Acrocephalus newtoni* capturée à Maromizaha, est de Madagascar, 13 décembre 2005 (Friederike Woog)



Figure 2. Unusual habitat for a Madagascar Swamp Warbler *Acrocephalus newtoni*: an open, degraded hilltop near a quarry at Maromizaha, eastern Madagascar, December 2005 (Friederike Woog)

Un milieu inhabituel pour la Rousserolle de Newton *Acrocephalus newtoni* : un sommet de colline à végétation ouverte et dégradée près d'une carrière à Maromizaha, est de Madagascar, décembre 2005 (Friederike Woog)

sus, following Redfern & Clarke 2001). With their streaked breast and chestnut iris with a 'piercing' look, the captured birds were apparently adult. The inside of the throat was bright orange, and their body-, wing- and tail-feathers very worn. They lacked body fat reserves, indicating they were not undertaking any long-distance migration.

Although considered sedentary ('flies only short distances': Langrand 1990), *A. newtoni* appears either (1) to depart swamps temporarily, perhaps only in the wet season when usually dry

sites are flooded, or (2) to possess a wider habitat range than previously described. Palearctic *Acrocephalus* species are well known to winter in dry habitats in Africa and the resident *A. baeticatus* also may spend the off-season in drier places (Urban *et al.* 1997). The Seychelles Warbler *A. sechellensis* occurs in scrub and tall, scrub-like vegetation, Cape Verde Warbler *A. brevipennis* is now found in a broad range of habitats, including gardens and agricultural areas, and Rodrigues Warbler *A. rodericanus* has adapted to dense thickets in largely exotic vegetation (BirdLife International 2000). Further data on the occurrence of the Madagascar Swamp Warbler away from swamps, especially in the wet season, would assist to clarify its ecological requirements.

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Staatliches Museum für Naturkunde Stuttgart, Germany.  
E-mail: [woog.smns@naturkundemuseum-bw.de](mailto:woog.smns@naturkundemuseum-bw.de)

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# Sur la nidification de l'Aigrette des récifs *Egretta gularis* en Tunisie

Marcello Grussu<sup>a</sup>, Habib Dlensi<sup>b</sup> et Hichem Azafzaf<sup>c</sup>

**On the breeding of Western Reef Heron *Egretta gularis* in Tunisia.** A mixed pair comprising a dark-morph Western Reef Heron *Egretta g. gularis* × Little Egret *E. garzetta* bred in 1993, 1996, 1998 and 2002, in a colony of Little Egrets in the saltmarshes of Thyna / Sfax, Gulf of Gabès, Tunisia. In 1993 four young were raised, in 1996 and 1998 the eggs were predated by Yellow-legged Gulls *Larus (cachinnans) michahellis*, and in 2002 the Western Reef Heron was killed by a hailstorm while incubating. These are the first breeding records of Western Reef Heron in Tunisia and in north-western Africa.

L'observation d'une Aigrette des récifs *Egretta gularis* couvant quatre œufs fin mai 1993 dans une colonie d'Aigrettes garzettes *E. garzetta* dans les salines de Thyna (34°38'N 10°43'E, ZICO TN027) à Sfax (H. Dlensi in Isenmann *et al.* 2005) constitue la première preuve de nidification de cette espèce en Tunisie et en Afrique du Nord. Nous donnons ici des informations supplémentaires concernant cette nidification, ainsi que sur d'autres faites en 1996–2002.

En mai 1993, l'Aigrette des récifs, qui avait le plumage 'classique' de la sous-espèce nominale—uniformément gris sombre avec la gorge blanche et le bec sombre—s'était accouplé avec une Aigrette garzette au plumage blanc. L'Aigrette des récifs, identifiée comme une femelle lors de l'accouplement, avait le même comportement que les Aigrettes garzettes de la colonie en ce qui concerne la méthode de recherche de nourriture, le cri, le vol et l'allure. Le 28 mai 1993 l'oiseau couvait quatre œufs, qui éclorement le 17 juin. Le couple a élevé les quatre jeunes, qui présentaient un plumage blanc avec des taches sombres. Trois ont survécu et ont été régulièrement observés à Thyna du 30 juin au 26 novembre 1993.

L'Aigrette des récifs adulte est restée aux salines de Thyna jusqu'en 2002 et y a été observée presque quotidiennement par HD. En 1996, 1998 et 2002, elle a de nouveau niché, toujours en s'accouplant avec une Aigrette garzette. Les nidifications de 1996 et 1998 ont eu lieu dans la partie nord des salines et échouèrent suite à la prédation des œufs par des Goélands leucophées *Larus (cachinnans) michahellis*, espèce abondante dans ces salines. En 2002, le couple mixte a niché, comme en 1993, dans la partie sud, dans d'une colonie d'Aigrettes garzettes. Le 15 mai 2002,

l'Aigrette des récifs couvant cinq œufs a été trouvée morte sur son nid suite à un orage de grêle qui s'est abattu sur le site. Cet orage a causé la mort de 835 oiseaux appartenant à 19 espèces (Tab. 1) et de nombreux œufs ont été détruits.

La colonie d'Aigrettes garzettes s'est implantée dans les salines de Thyna dans les années 1990, après des tentatives de reproduction infructueuses à partir de 1987 : de 8 nids en 1990 (Isenmann *et al.* 2005) la population a augmenté à 71 couples en 1994 et 132 en 2001. En 2002, la population a chuté à 80 individus, probablement à cause de la tempête de grêle mentionnée ci-dessus. La colonie était située sur des digues de drainage et les aigrettes étaient surtout associées à des groupes de Goélands leucophées et Goélands railleurs *Larus genei*. Certaines années, il y avait également des nids de Sternes hansel *Sterna nilotica* et pierregarin *S. hirundo* et d'Avocettes élégantes *Recurvirostra avosetta*.

## Présence de l'Aigrette des récifs en Méditerranée occidentale

La première observation de l'espèce en Tunisie remonte à janvier 1968 dans les salines de Thyna ; par la suite jusqu'à deux individus ont été observés régulièrement, principalement dans les années 1990, sur le même site et également, dans une moindre mesure, dans le Golfe de Gabès. En novembre 1984, un individu a été identifié comme appartenant à la sous-espèce *schistacea* (Isenmann *et al.* 2005).

Il n'y a pas de mention de l'Aigrette des récifs pour l'Algérie (Isenmann & Moali 2000). Au Maroc, l'espèce est accidentelle depuis 1974 (Thévenot *et al.* 2003). La nidification a été constatée en Camargue, France, en 1996 et 2002 (couple mixte *E. gularis* × *garzetta* : Kayser *et al.*



2000, Frémont & le CHN 2004), en Espagne dans les années 1970 et en 2004 (García *et al.* 2000, *Birding World* 2004 : 149) et peut-être en Sardaigne en 1996 (Grussu 2001).

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"Gruppo Ornitologico Sardo, Via De Candia, 47, 09045 Quartu Sant'Elena, Cagliari, Italy. E-mail : porphyrio@tiscali.it

<sup>b</sup>/o Association "Les Amis des Oiseaux"/ Sfax, BP 86, 3018 Sfax, Tunisie. E-mail : DLENSI.H@topnet.tn

"Groupe Tunisien d'Ornithologie (GTO), 11, Rue Abou El Alla El Maari, Cité El Houda, 2080 Ariana, Tunisie. E-mail : azafzaf@gnet.tn

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Tableau 1. Oiseaux trouvés morts suite à l'orage de grêle sur le site de Thyna, Tunisie, le 10 mai 2002.  
Table 1. Birds found dead following the hailstorm at Thyna, Tunisia, on 10 May 2002.

N°	Espèce / Species		Nombre d'oiseaux trouvés morts / Number of birds found dead
1	<i>Larus genei</i>	Goéland railleur / Slender-billed Gull	553
2	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>	Avocette élégante / Pied Avocet	81
3	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	Sterne pierregarin / Common Tern	49
4	<i>Phoenicopterus (ruber) roseus</i>	Flamant rose / Greater Flamingo	27
5	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	Bécasseau cocorli / Curlew Sandpiper	20
6	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	Aigrette garzette / Little Egret	18
7	<i>Calidris minuta</i>	Bécasseau minute / Little Stint	15
8	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	Pluvier argenté / Grey Plover	14
9	<i>Sterna albifrons</i>	Sterne naine / Little Tern	12
10	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	Echasse blanche / Black-winged Stilt	9
11	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	Tourterelle des bois / European Turtle Dove	8
12	<i>Sterna nilotica</i>	Sterne hansel / Gull-billed Tern	7
13	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>	Gravelot à collier interrompu / Kentish Plover	6
14	<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>	Tarier des prés / Whinchat	5
15	<i>Larus (cachinnans) michahellis</i>	Goéland leucopnée / Yellow-legged Gull	4
16	<i>Burhinus oedicnemus</i>	Oedicnème criard / Stone-curlew	2
17	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	Spatule blanche / Eurasian Spoonbill	2
18	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	Chevalier gambette / Common Redshank	2
19	<i>Morus bassanus</i>	Fou de Bassan / Northern Gannet	1
	Total		835

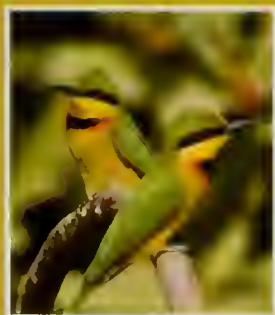


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# First record of Rüppell's Warbler *Sylvia rueppelli* for The Gambia

Mike D. Crewe<sup>a</sup>, Megan A. Crewe<sup>a</sup> and Tombong Sanyang<sup>b</sup>

Première mention de la Fauvette de Rüppell *Sylvia rueppelli* pour la Gambie. Le 22 novembre 2006, une Fauvette de Rüppell *Sylvia rueppelli*, probablement une femelle adulte, a été observée sur la rive nord du fleuve Gambie, dans une brousse à *Acacia* près de la zone humide de Baobolon (13°28'N 15°04'W). Les caractères distinctifs sont discutés par rapport aux autres espèces du genre *Sylvia*; cet oiseau est probablement un égaré. Ceci constitue la première donnée documentée pour la Gambie.

On 22 November 2006, during a boat trip from Tendaba Camp, The Gambia, into Baobolon wetland, an area of mangrove creeks on the north side of the Gambia River (13°28'N 15°04'W), MDC heard a European Wryneck *Jynx torquilla* in adjacent dry *Acacia* scrub. After disembarking to try and locate it, MDC noticed at least four Subalpine Warblers *Sylvia cantillans* and another passerine which he was unable to immediately identify. It was grey with a contrasting dark tail and dark tertials, the latter with well-defined pale fringes. TS's first impression was of a Grey Tit-Flycatcher *Myioparus plumbeus*. However, the bird was clearly a warbler, being too compact and short-tailed for a flycatcher, and had a horizontal feeding posture. It also foraged actively in the branches, rather than adopting the hyperactive flycatching movements of Grey Tit-Flycatcher (with which MDC and TS both had previous experience). MDC concluded that it was probably a Rüppell's Warbler *Sylvia rueppelli*, a species with which he was familiar from the eastern Mediterranean. When MAC, who had an iPod with calls of European birds, played the song and call of Rüppell's Warbler, the bird, which we had temporarily lost, swiftly returned to an *Acacia* in front of us. Twice the bird disappeared but was lured back into view using playback; in contrast, there was no response from nearby Subalpine Warblers, and playback of Subalpine Warbler vocalisations evinced no response from the bird, strongly suggesting that the bird was indeed a Rüppell's Warbler, a species not previously recorded in The Gambia (Barlow *et al.* 1997, Borrow & Demey 2001). The following description is taken from notes made shortly after and before consulting any relevant literature.

## Description

Overall impression was of a medium-sized *Sylvia*, smaller than Common Whitethroat *S. communis* but larger than Subalpine Warbler and structurally more like the latter, though perhaps marginally more 'chunky'. Upperparts plain ash-grey, more or less uniform from forehead and cheeks to mantle and rump. Throat pure white, cleanly demarcated from grey cheeks; breast white, becoming grey-washed on belly and flanks. Tail blackish with white in outer tail-feathers; wing-feathers greyish to dark grey, darkest on tertials and alula, with all feathers having clearly defined pale creamy white fringes, particularly well marked on the tertials. Legs rather bright pinkish brown; irides apparently brown (rather than dark/blackish) with fairly clear straw to pale brown eye-ring. Bill dark grey with pale base to lower mandible, rather heavier than typical Subalpine Warbler.

## Discussion

The overall grey appearance with clean white throat and dark, pale-based bill with a subtly decurved look, coupled with rather furtive feeding action in comparatively dense vegetation indicate a *Sylvia* warbler. The complete lack of any black on the head, coupled with a lack of brown or buff in the mantle or wings made it very unlikely that it was a male and suggested an adult female Rüppell's Warbler. On return to the UK, a search of references revealed that the bird matched an individual seen at Holme, Norfolk, UK, in August 1992 (Hibberd 1992), identified as an adult female based on wing and tail features (Lewington 1992). Descriptions in Shirihai *et al.* (1996) and Shirihai *et al.* (2001) further support the identifi-

cation of the Gambia bird as an adult female Rüppell's Warbler.

*Sylvia* warblers are rather easily distinguished from other warbler genera, but can be tricky to separate from one another in some female-type plumages. Common Whitethroat, Tristram's *S. deserticola*, Spectacled *S. conspicillata* and Subalpine Warblers can be eliminated as they have brown on the back/wings or a buff/pink wash to the underparts. Garden *S. borin* and Barred Warblers *S. nisoria* and Blackcap *S. atricapilla* are easily eliminated by their plain face pattern without strong contrast between a pure white throat and grey cheeks. Lesser Whitethroat *S. curruca* has grey (not bright pinkish-brown) legs; Orphean Warbler *S. hortensis* has a heavier bill and lacks pale fringes to the flight feathers (in particular the obvious, well-defined pale edges to the contrastingly dark-centred tertials of the Gambian bird), whilst Sardinian Warbler *S. melanocephala* exhibits a range of features depending on age and sex, in particular a buffish-cream to reddish eye-ring, lack of an obviously dark tail and strong dusky grey or brownish wash to the flanks.

### Vagrancy and possible origins

Rüppell's Warbler has a rather restricted world range, breeding in the eastern Mediterranean from the southern Balkans east to south-central Turkey and the northern Levant, and wintering mainly in Chad and Sudan (Cramp 1992, Shirihai *et al.* 2001, Aymí & Gargallo 2006). It has a circular migration route, moving south or even south-west in autumn, but returning via a more easterly route through the Middle East in spring. Vagrancy potential is proven with extralimital records in at least nine European countries, including the Faeroes and UK. In West Africa, the species has been reported exceptionally from Niger and Mali (Urban *et al.* 1997), making a record as far west as The Gambia not so unlikely. Alternatively, with proven vagrancy to Western Europe in autumn, such a bird may then move south or south-west, perhaps with Subalpine Warblers, to winter in The Gambia. Aymí & Gargallo (2006) mention that during migration Rüppell's Warbler has been recorded in loose association with other *Sylvia*;

this is frequently observed in the eastern Mediterranean, e.g. in Israel and Cyprus (MDC pers. obs.). Interestingly, of the four British records, three are from the post-breeding migration period, in August/September 1997, June 1979, October 1990 and August/September 1992 (Rogers 1993).

### Acknowledgements

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- <sup>a</sup>29 St Austin's Grove, Sheringham, Norfolk, NR26 8DF UK. E-mail: mike.sturnus@btinternet.com
- <sup>b</sup>E-mail: tomsang1977@yahoo.com

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# First confirmed record of Cardinal Woodpecker *Dendropicos fuscescens* for Niger

Bruno Portier

Première mention confirmée du Pic cardinal *Dendropicos fuscescens* pour le Niger. Le 18 février 2006, alors qu'un vent de sable a contraint de nombreux migrateurs à se poser le long de la vallée du fleuve Niger avant d'entamer la traversée du Sahara, un Pic cardinal *Dendropicos fuscescens* a été observé près de Tillabéri (14°09'N 01°31'E). Il s'agit de la première observation confirmée de l'espèce au Niger. Seule une ancienne publication de 1950 sur les noms d'animaux en Tamasheq fait mention de cette espèce dans la région de Tahoua mais sans plus de détail.

In the morning of 18 February 2006, I was birding along the N1 road between Niamey and Tillabéri (14°09'N 01°31'E). The area is on the left (northern) bank of the Niger River and comprises dry fields and rocky outcrops with some shrubs and small trees. Dominant tree species are acacias, alternating with dense thickets of *Balanites aegyptica*, of maximum 3–4 m height.

Winds blowing from the north and carrying sand strongly limited visibility, and apparently caused Palearctic migrants to land before attempting to cross the Sahara, as the trees and bushes were alive with insectivores, feeding amongst the branches or on the ground. Species included Western Bonelli's Warbler *Phylloscopus bonelli* (the commonest), Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*, Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*, Olivaceous Warbler *Hippolais pallida*, Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis* and Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator*. There were also singles of Eurasian Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*, Black Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas podobe*, Rufous Scrub Robin *C. galactotes* and Orphean Warbler *Sylvia hortensis*.

During this activity, I heard an unfamiliar call comprising a rapid series of rattling *kree-kree-kree-kree* notes. I soon noticed a small woodpecker, c.10 m away, with pale cheeks, green upperparts and faintly spotted yellow-green wing-coverts. Although the bird was fairly shy and preferred the far side of the trunk, I observed it periodically for c.3 minutes through 10×42 binoculars. Back in the car I wrote down the following additional details: red nape and hindcrown, becoming dark brownish on forecrown and forehead; very pale whitish head-sides with some faint dark streaks and a narrow dark grey malar stripe; throat

whitish; upper breast and flanks slightly streaked; orange-red uppertail-coverts.

The bird was none of the four woodpecker species known from Niger (Giraudoux *et al.* 1986, Dowsett 1993). Grey Woodpecker *Dendropicos goertae* and Fine-spotted Woodpecker *Campethera punctuligera* are, amongst other differences, much larger. The similar-sized Brown-backed Woodpecker *Picoides obsoletus* and Little Grey Woodpecker *Dendropicos elachus* have brown or grey-brown, not green, upperparts. The bird exactly matched the description of adult male Cardinal Woodpecker *Dendropicos fuscescens* (Borrow & Demey 2001).

In West Africa, Cardinal Woodpecker *D. f. lafresnayi* is scarce to locally common over a broad belt of wooded habitats, from Senegambia to Sierra Leone and east to Nigeria (Fry *et al.* 1986, Borrow & Demey 2001). It occurs in south-east Burkina Faso (Green & Sayer 1979), c.300 km from where I observed the species in Niger. A few records north of its known breeding range have been reported, in central Burkina Faso and coastal Mauritania (Lamarche 1988, Thonnerieux *et al.* 1989). For Niger, a publication on Tamasheq animal names mentions the occurrence of '*Dendropicos lafresnayi zechi* NEUM.' in the Tahoua region, without further details (Nicolas 1950). The observation reported here thus constitutes the first documented record for Niger.

## Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Joost Brouwer for encouraging me to write this note and for passing on the historical publication found by Adam Manvell. Ron Demey and Joost Brouwer commented on earlier drafts of this note.

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***Pennant-winged Nightjar***



# First records of Nimba Flycatcher *Melaenornis annamarulae* for Ghana

Ron Demey<sup>a</sup> and Andrew Hester<sup>b</sup>

Premières mentions du Gobemouche du Libéria *Melaenornis annamarulae* pour le Ghana. Le chant du Gobemouche du Libéria *Melaenornis annamarulae* a été entendu et partiellement enregistré dans la Forêt classée d'Atewa, Ghana, le 18 juin 2006, sans que le chanteur ne puisse être vu. La présence de l'espèce a ensuite pu être confirmée par une observation visuelle de deux individus, le 27 mai 2007. Le Gobemouche du Libéria, considéré comme Vulnérable, n'était connu que de la Guinée, la Sierra Leone, le Libéria et la Côte d'Ivoire. Les observations rapportées ici étendent son aire de distribution d'environ 500 km vers l'est.

Nimba Flycatcher *Melaenornis annamarulae* is a rare to scarce and local endemic of the Upper Guinea rainforest block, where it is known from south-east Sierra Leone, south-east Guinea, Liberia and western Côte d'Ivoire (Borrow & Demey 2001, BirdLife International 2004). As the region's lowland forest is disappearing at an alarming rate, this species' population is presumed to be declining rapidly. It is therefore classified as Vulnerable (BirdLife International 2004).

On 18 June 2006, at 13.00 hrs, during an ornithological survey of Atewa Range Forest Reserve—one of only two main forest reserves in Ghana holding remnants of upland evergreen rainforest (Hall & Swaine 1976)—RD heard a song, emanating from the canopy beside the main track ascending the plateau (06°13'52"N 00°33'17"W; c.620 m), which he identified as being from Nimba Flycatcher, a species he was familiar with from Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Liberia. A few final phrases were tape-recorded before it started to rain and the bird stopped singing. In an attempt to confirm the identification by hearing the bird again and seeing it, RD visited the location on the three following days, with long periods of time spent at or near the spot, but the bird was not encountered again. The tape-recorded part of the song was compared to published (Chappuis 2000) and RD's unpublished recordings of the species and was found to be very similar.

Informed of its presumed presence, AH subsequently searched for the species during a few day trips to Atewa and finally confirmed the original identification on 27 May 2007, when he obtained excellent views of two individuals foraging along horizontal branches in the canopy atop the ridge

and uttering a chattering call. The birds were entirely charcoal-grey with a rather broad head and a square-tipped tail. Perched, they had the upright stance typical of flycatchers. When AH played a recording of the song (from Chappuis 2000), they reacted by singing back. Their vocalisations were very similar to the first and second parts of the song on Chappuis (2000).

On 12 August 2007, visiting birder David Shackleford obtained brief views in the same area (D. Shackleford *in litt.* 2007), and on 26 August AH had prolonged views of a pair singing from exposed branches in the canopy and was able to tape-record the song. AH had observed birds that he suspected were this species in September 2005 and on 20 August 2006. F. Dowsett-Lemaire (pers. comm.) once heard a few song phrases of a flycatcher she could not identify in February 2005, and which she thought were probably from this species, when she was informed of RD's encounter and had listened to recordings.

This find constitutes a new species for Ghana. Atewa is also the easternmost known site for Nimba Flycatcher, extending its range by c.500 km from the previous easternmost locality, Mopri Forest Reserve (05°50'N 04°55'W), in Côte d'Ivoire (Gartshore *et al.* 1995). Atewa Range Forest Reserve, which covers c.23,200 ha, is an Important Bird Area (IBA) and harbours 14 species of conservation concern (Ntiemoa-Baidu *et al.* 2001, Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2005, BirdLife International 2007). It comprises a steep-sided, mostly level plateau at 700–800 m. The forest canopy here is of variable height and presents many gaps, with larger trees reaching up to 40–50 m and emerging above a closed subcanopy of 10–25 m. The forest has been logged in the past

and numerous transects are being cut for mineral exploration. Mining of bauxite is being considered.

### Acknowledgements

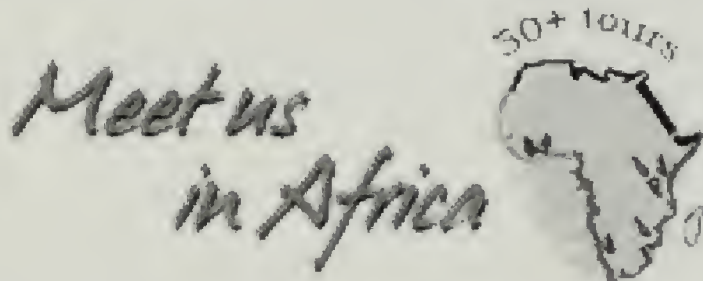
RD's field work was undertaken as part of Conservation International's Rapid Assessment Program (RAP) survey of Atewa Range Forest Reserve. David Shackleford and Françoise Dowsett-Lemaire kindly supplied relevant data.

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- <sup>a</sup>Van der Heimstraat 52, 2582SB Den Haag, Netherlands. E-mail: [rondemey@cs.com](mailto:rondemey@cs.com)
- <sup>b</sup>SGS Environment, PO Box 732, Accra, Ghana. E-mail: [andrew.hester@sgs.com](mailto:andrew.hester@sgs.com)

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# Wattled Starling *Creatophora cinerea* near Accra: a first record for Ghana

Sveinung Hobberstad

Un Etourneau caronculé *Creatophora cinerea* près d'Accra: première donnée pour le Ghana. Un Etourneau caronculé *Creatophora cinerea* a été vu dans un jardin près d'Accra le 1er juillet 2003. Ceci constitue la première mention pour le Ghana et la seule donnée pour cette espèce entre les environs du Lac Tchad au Nigeria et la Gambie.

On 1 July 2003 I was birding in a market garden at Dansoman, on the western outskirts of Accra (05°31'N 00°19'W), an area of c.1 ha comprising fruit trees and vegetable plots. An unfamiliar starling was perched in a tree c.15–20 m from me, and I was able to watch it for approximately 30 seconds. Its overall coloration was grey, with contrasting black in the wings, and it had a pale bill. Shortly thereafter I consulted Borrow & Demey (2001) and immediately identified it as a Wattled Starling *Creatophora cinerea*, clearly in non-breeding dress, because the bird lacked yellow wattles. I have visited Ghana five times, some seven months in all, and this is the only time I have noticed this species.

This is the first record for Ghana and the only report of Wattled Starling between the Lake Chad area of Nigeria (Ottosson *et al.* 2002) and The Gambia (Gore 1990, Barlow *et al.* 1997). The species is known to be an erratic wanderer, having even reached the Seychelles and Aldabra (Skerrett & the Seychelles Bird Records Committee 2001).

## Acknowledgement

I thank Bob Dowsett for his help in preparing this note.

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# First record of Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva* for Uganda

Allan Kirby

Première mention du Pluvier fauve *Pluvialis fulva* pour l'Ouganda. Un groupe de six Pluviers fauves *Pluvialis fulva* a été observé et photographié près de la rivière Ishasha, dans le Parc National Queen Elizabeth, Ouganda, le 15 février 2007. Le Pluvier fauve niche dans l'Arctique russe et hiverne en petit nombre en Afrique de l'Est. Il est régulier le long de la côte de l'Éritrée, la Somalie et le Kenya, rare en Tanzanie, et sporadique à l'intérieur, du Soudan et l'Éthiopie au Burundi, mais n'avait pas encore été signalé de l'Ouganda.

On 15 February 2007, my wife and I visited Queen Elizabeth National Park, Uganda. At c.09.30 hrs, whilst driving along the grassy flats bordering the reedbeds near the Ishasha River, we spotted six unusual-looking waders. They were typically plover-like in shape and stance, with strikingly golden plumage. Although we were unable to get close without disturbing them, we succeeded in gaining good views from c.15–20 m and observed the birds for an hour with 10×40 binoculars. I took field notes and also acquired photographs (Figs. 1–2).

The birds were rather slender, not dumpy, with a prominent buffish-white supercilium and a very pale, whitish area at the bill base. They were mainly golden-buff above with a buffish-white throat which became darker lower, forming a broad golden breast-band (particularly conspicuous on two individuals). In flight, a diffuse, narrow whitish bar on the upperwing was visible, whilst the underwings were rather pale grey, grad-

ually darkening towards the base of the wing; the primary tips were also darker, but there was no black 'armpit'. The rump was dark and the feet protruded beyond the tail in flight. Legs and feet were grey-black.

After checking the identification features in Stevenson & Fanshawe (2002) and Sinclair & Ryan (2003), and discussing the finer points with Adam Riley via SMS while still watching the birds, we concluded that they were Pacific Golden Plovers *Pluvialis fulva*. I informed Derek Pomeroy who, together with Morris Matseba *et al.*, observed all six birds at the same place c.2 hours later, and confirmed the identification.

Pacific Golden Plover breeds in northern Siberia and is a winter visitor in small numbers to East Africa. It is regular in coastal Eritrea, Somalia and Kenya, rare in coastal Tanzania, and sporadic inland from Sudan and Ethiopia to Burundi (Urban *et al.* 1986, Stevenson & Fanshawe 2002). *P. fulva* was, however, previously unrecorded in



Figures 1–2. Pacific Golden Plovers *Pluvialis fulva*, Queen Elizabeth National Park, Uganda, 15 February 2007 (Allan Kirby)

Pluviers fauves *Pluvialis fulva*, Parc National Queen Elizabeth, Ouganda, 15 février 2007 (Allan Kirby)



Uganda (Carswell *et al.* 2005), making this the first record for the country.

### Acknowledgements

I thank Adam Riley for discussing the identity of the birds and subsequently examining my photographs. Derek Pomeroy and Ron Demey commented on a draft of this note.

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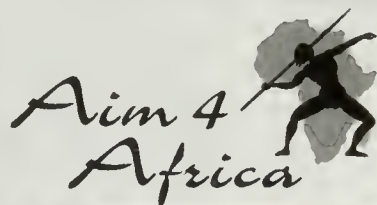
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# A 'Veiled Blackcap', the partially melanistic form of Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*, on Tenerife, Canary Islands

Beneharo Rodríguez<sup>a</sup>, Airam Rodríguez<sup>b</sup> and Juan Curbelo<sup>c</sup>

Un individu de la forme partiellement mélanique de la Fauvette à tête noire *Sylvia atricapilla* à Ténériffe, Îles Canaries. Le 19 novembre et 6 décembre 2006 un mâle partiellement mélanique de la Fauvette à tête noire *Sylvia atricapilla* a été observé près de Los Silos, Ténériffe, Îles Canaries. Ceci est la deuxième donnée à Ténériffe de cette forme rare depuis les observations de Cabrera à la fin du 19<sup>ème</sup> siècle.

**B**reeding populations of Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla* on the Atlantic Islands comprise two subspecies: *S. a. gularis* in the Azores and Cape Verdes, and *S. a. heineken* on Madeira and the Canaries, the last form being also present in Iberia and north-west Africa (Shirihai *et al.* 2001). A partially melanistic form, known as 'Veiled Blackcap' (after Berthold *et al.* 1997), was first reported from Madeira in 1829, and was subsequently also found on several islands of the Azores, on Tenerife and La Palma in the Canaries, and probably also on Porto Santo, in the Madeira archipelago, but not on the Cape Verde Islands (Berthold *et al.* 1997, Ludwigs 2000, Barone & Delgado 2001, Martín & Lorenzo 2001, Shirihai *et al.* 2001, Hering 2005).

Although considerable individual and age-related variation exists amongst males, they generally exhibit an all-black head, and darker grey and more olive plumage than the normal form, whilst females, which vary less than males, are dark olive-brown (see Berthold *et al.* 1997, Shirihai *et al.* 2001). Experiments with birds in captivity have revealed that this morph development is genetically controlled and consistent with a single autosomal gene locus, melanistic birds representing the recessive homozygotic genotype (Southern 1951, Berthold *et al.* 1996).

On 19 November and 6 December 2006, we observed a male 'Veiled Blackcap' in a garden with Canarian palm trees *Phoenix canariensis* near Los Silos, Tenerife. Ripe fruits attracted several bird species, including Sardinian Warblers *Sylvia melanocephala*, Canary Islands Chiffchaffs *Phylloscopus canariensis*, Spanish Sparrows *Passer hispaniolensis* and many Blackcaps (>10 individuals/half hour). Whereas general morphology and behaviour of the 'Veiled Blackcap' were similar to that of typical *S. atricapilla heineken*, plumage col-

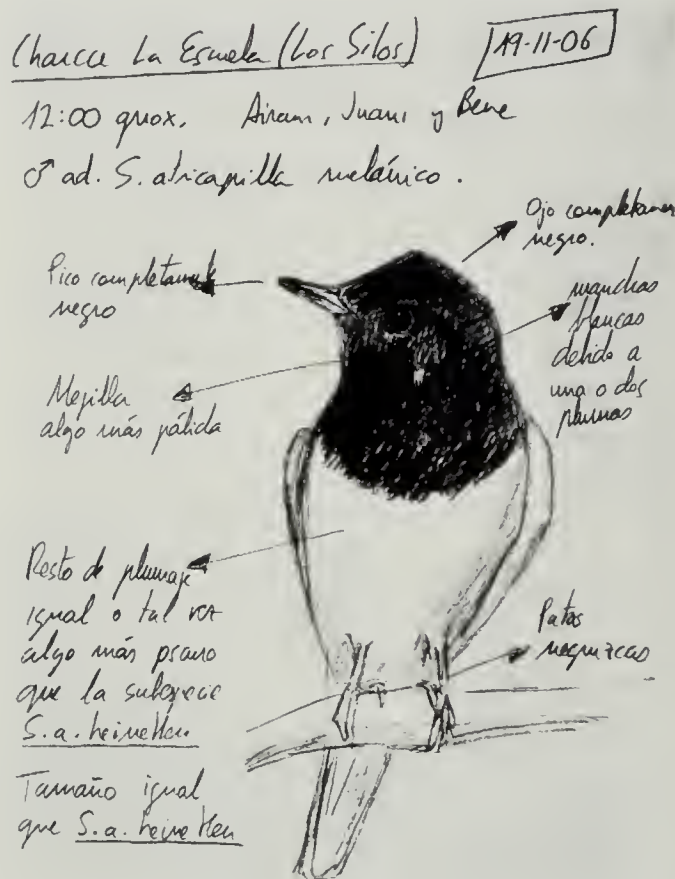


Figure 1. Field sketch of the male 'Veiled Blackcap' *Sylvia atricapilla* observed near Los Silos, Tenerife, Canary Islands, on 19 November and 6 December 2006.

Croquis de terrain du mâle partiellement mélanique de la Fauvette à tête noire *Sylvia atricapilla* observé près de Los Silos, Ténériffe, Îles Canaries, le 19 novembre et 6 décembre 2006.

oration was strikingly different. The black on the head extended to the nape, head-sides, throat and upper breast, whilst the rest of the plumage appeared slightly darker than that of typical individuals (Fig. 1). There was a tiny white spot on the neck-sides. The bill and eyes were black, and the legs dark.



This appears to be only the second record of this form on Tenerife, since the observations made by Cabrera (1893) at the end of the 19th century. On La Palma, where it was formerly locally common, this form has decreased dramatically, perhaps because it was a favoured local cagebird (Berthold *et al.* 1997, Martín & Lorenzo 2001, Shirihai *et al.* 2001), and it was searched for in vain by Cullen *et al.* (1952) and Morphy (1965); Bannerman (1963) suggested it was probably extinct. However, some 15 individuals have been sighted since the 1980s, the most recent in May 1999 (Ludwigs 2000, Martín & Lorenzo 2001). On Madeira and the Azores, on the other hand, this form was estimated to comprise c.2 % of the total population (Berthold *et al.* 1997).

### Acknowledgements

Tony Clarke commented on the manuscript; Ron Demey made useful comments and improved an earlier version.

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 “La Malecita s/n, 38480 Buenavista del Norte, Tenerife, Canary Islands, Spain. E-mail: benerguez@terra.es  
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# Martial Eagle *Polemaetus bellicosus* apparently killing White-headed Vulture *Trigonoceph occipitalis*

Ian Bruce-Miller

Un Aigle martial *Polemaetus bellicosus* apparemment tuant un Vautour à tête blanche *Trigonoceph occipitalis*. Un Aigle martial *Polemaetus bellicosus* et un Vautour à tête blanche *Trigonoceph occipitalis* ont été trouvés par terre, leurs serres plantés l'un dans l'autre en Zambie, en octobre 2000. Bien que le vautour ait été mort, l'aigle ne pouvait pas se libérer. L'auteur réussit à détacher les serres du vautour de la cuisse de l'aigle, mais celui-ci avait toujours ses serres dans la poitrine du vautour. Le lendemain l'aigle, toujours faible, était perché sur le vautour et avait mangé une grande partie du dos. Un jour plus tard, la poitrine avait été mangée et l'aigle réussit à s'envoler à l'approche de l'observateur. Bien que l'Aigle martial capture une grande diversité de proies, y compris de grands oiseaux, ceci est apparemment la première donnée de capture d'un autre rapace diurne par l'espèce. Toutefois, dans le cas rapporté, l'Aigle martial ne cherchait peut-être pas à tuer le vautour pour le manger. Avant sa rencontre fatale avec l'aigle, ce dernier avait probablement été attiré par la carcasse d'une antilope tuée par des lions qui se trouvait dans les environs.

Whilst in Namwala District, Southern Province, Zambia, in October 2000, at c.16°15'S 26°03'E, I came across a Martial Eagle *Polemaetus bellicosus* and a White-headed Vulture *Trigonoceph occipitalis* on the ground, apparently bound together. On closer inspection the vulture was dead, yet the eagle was trapped by the vulture's talons which had penetrated the eagle's thigh and had gradually stiffened after death. Similarly, the eagle's talons clasped the breast of the vulture. I cut the vulture's leg tendons to loosen the grip and managed to free them from the eagle, but I was reluctant to tackle the latter's formidable feet

which appeared rather stiffened by cramp, so I left the eagle to its own devices.

I returned the following day to find the eagle standing on the vulture and much of the vulture's back consumed. As I approached the eagle tried to fly away, but it was clearly weak and could not get airborne. I turned the vulture carcass over, skinned the underparts and left. Next day the eagle was still beside the vulture and the entire breast had been eaten. When I approached, it managed to fly out of sight, though not particularly strongly.

Although Martial Eagles take a wide range of prey, including large birds, such as geese, herons,



Figures 1–2. Martial Eagle *Polemaetus bellicosus* trapped by claws of dead White-headed Vulture *Trigonoceph occipitalis*, Namwala District, Southern Province, Zambia, October 2000 (Ian Bruce-Miller)

Un Aigle martial *Polemaetus bellicosus* prisonnier d'un Vautour à tête blanche *Trigonoceph occipitalis* mort, leurs serres plantés l'un dans l'autre, Namwala District, Southern Province, Zambie, octobre 2000 (Ian Bruce-Miller)



storks and bustards (Brown *et al.* 1982, Steyn 1982, Ferguson-Lees & Christie 2001), I am unable to find any reference to it taking other diurnal birds of prey. Steyn (1982) mentions the discovery of the remains of six Spotted Eagle Owls *Bubo africanus* at a Martial Eagle's nest in Kenya as being the most unusual avian prey recorded. However, the eagle in this case may not have intended to kill the vulture for food. I am unaware how the incident commenced, but Lions *Panthera leo* had killed a Sable Antelope *Hippotragus niger* nearby, which carcass had attracted many vultures. Presumably the White-headed Vulture had been attracted to this before it became 'involved' with the eagle.

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Peter Steyn and Ron Demey commented on a draft of this note.

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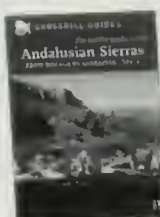
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# First record of Brown Noddy *Anous stolidus* for Guinea-Bissau

Jan van der Winden<sup>a</sup> and Hamilton Monteiro<sup>b</sup>

Première mention du Noddi brun *Anous stolidus* pour la Guinée-Bissau. Le 19 janvier 2006, un Noddi brun *Anous stolidus* adulte a été découvert et photographié sur l'Île d'Acapa Imbone (11°00'N 16°04'W), dans l'archipel des Bijagós, Guinée-Bissau. L'oiseau était en train de se reposer au bord d'une colonie de Sternes caspiennes *Sterna caspia*. Ceci constitue la première donnée pour le pays de cette espèce, qui est occasionnelle le long des côtes Ouest africaines en dehors de la saison de reproduction.

In January 2006, during a waterbird census of major coastal wetlands from Mauritania to Sierra Leone, coordinated by Wetlands International, we visited the Bijagós Archipelago in Guinea-Bissau. On 19 January, we were on Acapa Imbone Island (11°00'N 16°04'W), south of Orango Island, to census the Caspian Tern *Sterna caspia* breeding colony. At the edge of the colony we discovered a resting noddy *Anous* sp. The bird could be approached down to 20 m and was photographed (Fig. 1). It was entirely dark

brown with a white cap fading to grey on the rear crown and nape, and had a relatively heavy bill. These features identified it as an adult Brown Noddy *Anous stolidus*. Black Noddy *A. minutus*, which also is a vagrant to West African coasts, has darker, more blackish plumage, a more contrasting and extensive white cap, and a more slender bill (Borrow & Demey 2001).

In this region, Brown Noddy is a vagrant away from its breeding grounds (mainly the Tinhosas Islands and Annobón) in the eastern Gulf of

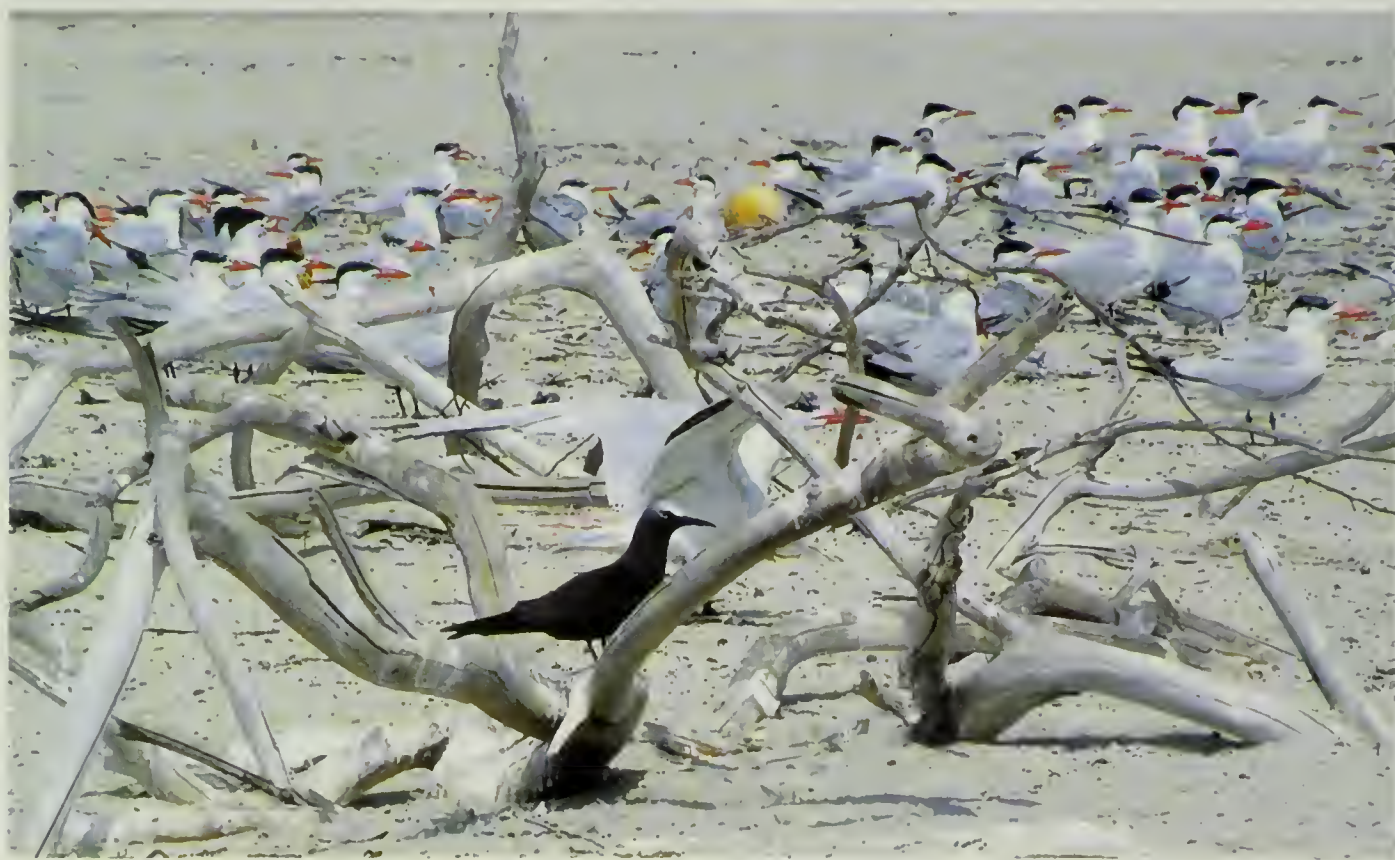


Figure 1. Brown Noddy *Anous stolidus* in a Caspian Tern *Sterna caspia* colony, Acapa Imbone Island, Bijagós Archipelago, Guinea-Bissau, 19 January 2006 (Jan van der Winden)

Noddi brun *Anous stolidus* dans une colonie de Sternes caspiennes *Sterna caspia*, Île d'Acapa Imbone, Archipel des Bijagós, Guinée-Bissau, 19 janvier 2006 (Jan van der Winden)



Guinea. Incidental records in West Africa are available from The Gambia, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Nigeria, Gabon and Bioko (Borrow & Demey 2001). It is, however, not mentioned in the recent updated checklist of Guinea-Bissau (Dodman *et al.* 2004). The record reported here is therefore the first for the country. A Brown Noddy (the same individual?) was observed at the same site on 24 May 2006 (Veen & Dallmeijer 2007).

### Acknowledgements

Joãozinho Sá and Tim Dodman (Wetlands International) and Bernd de Bruijn (Vogelbescherming Nederland) are thanked for their support in organising and funding the Guinea-Bissau census. Anton Costa, Januario G. Silva, Fay Djedjo, Bacar Coma and Frank Willems joined the census. Tim Dodman and Ron Demey commented on a draft of this note and kindly suggested improvements.

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<sup>a</sup>Bureau Waardenburg, PO Box 365, 4100 AJ Culemborg, Netherlands. E-mail: J.van.der.winden@buwa.nl

<sup>b</sup>Wetlands International/Gabinete de Planificação Costeira, Apartado 23, 1031 Codex-Bissau, Guinea-Bissau. E-mail: gpc@mail.gtelecom.gw

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# First records for Sierra Leone of Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*, Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata* and Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus*

Jan van der Winden<sup>a</sup>, Alhaji Siaka<sup>b</sup>, Kenneth Gbengba<sup>b</sup>, Sjoerd Dirksen<sup>a</sup> and Martin Poot<sup>a</sup>

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Premières observations pour la Sierra Leone de la Spatule blanche *Platalea leucorodia*, du Canard souchet *Anas clypeata* et du Chevalier bargette *Xenus cinereus*. Lors des dénombrements d'oiseaux d'eau organisés le long de la côte de la Sierra Leone en janvier–février 2005, trois migrants paléarctiques ont été observés pour la première fois dans le pays: la Spatule blanche *Platalea leucorodia* (12 individus à Sasiyek Creek, 08°56'N 13°14'W, près de l'île Yeliboya, le 9 février), le Canard souchet *Anas clypeata* (au moins 18 individus à Kagboroo Creek, 07°57'N 12°53'W, dans la Baie de Yawri, le 28 janvier) et le Chevalier bargette *Xenus cinereus* (un individu, également à Kagboroo Creek, le 28 janvier).

**I**n January–February 2005, a waterbird census was undertaken at five coastal wetlands in Sierra Leone: Scarcies Estuary, Sierra Leone River Estuary, Yawri Bay, Turtle Islands and Sherbo Island. In total, 93,000 waterbirds were counted and more than 100,000 were estimated to be present in coastal brackish and marine wetlands (van der Winden *et al.* 2007). Three Palearctic migrants were observed that were previously unrecorded in Sierra Leone (Dowsett 1993): Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*, Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata* and Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus*. All were identified by at least two observers with extensive experience of these species in Eurasia. The exact status of all three species in Sierra Leone is unknown. Because coastal waterbird census work was highly sporadic and far from complete in the past, scarce species might easily have gone undetected. The census in 2005 suggested these species are either vagrants or more or less regular visitors in very small numbers. Details are presented below.

## Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

A flock of 12 was at Sasiyek Creek (08°56'N 13°14'W), in the Scarcies Estuary near Yeliboya Island, on 9 February 2005. The flock flew north-west at low altitude. It comprised at least two adults and eight immatures; two individuals could not be aged. The adults were distinguished from the locally relatively common African Spoonbill *P. alba* by the absence of bare red facial skin, black bill with yellow tip (grey with red cutting edges in *P. alba*) and black (not red) legs. The yellow-

tipped bill is indicative of the nominate race (the subspecies *balsaci*, an endemic resident of the Banc d'Arguin, north-west Mauritania, has an all-black bill). The immatures could not be separated with certainty from African Spoonbill, but their pinkish bills suggested they were Eurasian Spoonbills (the bill of immature African Spoonbills tends to be more yellowish: Borrow & Demey 2001).

The species' nearest regular and most important wintering grounds are in the coastal area between Mauritania and southern Senegal (e.g. Overdijk 2001). Eurasian Spoonbills winter less regularly along the coasts of Guinea-Bissau and Guinea, and patchily inland in Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, north-east Nigeria and Chad (Cramp & Simmons 1977, Brown *et al.* 1982, Borrow & Demey 2001).

## Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

At least 18 Northern Shovelers were at Kagboroo Creek (07°57'N 12°53'W), in Yawri Bay near Shenge, on 28 January 2005. Amongst them were at least two adult males, both moulting into breeding plumage. Six individuals resting within a flock of 165 Northern Pintails *A. acuta* were observed at close range, whilst another 12 were seen in flight accompanied by one female or immature Garganey *A. querquedula*.

In West Africa, Northern Shoveler is fairly common throughout the Sahel zone, mainly at inland freshwater sites (Brown *et al.* 1982). It is a vagrant to coastal areas of Guinea (Demey 2006), Liberia (Gatter 1997), Côte d'Ivoire (Borrow & Demey 2001), Ghana (Grimes 1987) and Nigeria



(Elgood *et al.* 1994). Yawri Bay was the only marine coastal site in Sierra Leone where Palearctic ducks were found during the survey.

### Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus*

A single was observed at Kagboroo Creek (07°57'N 12°53'W), in Yawri Bay near Shenge, on 28 January 2005. It was feeding at the edge of an intertidal bank and observed from less than 100 m. The bird was compared with many other wader species present, including Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*, Common Greenshank *T. nebularia*, Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*, Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*, Bartailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica* and Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*. It differed from all these by its typical, long, slightly upturned bill and shortish legs, thus resembling a long-billed Common Sandpiper. The bill base and legs were yellowish.

In Africa, Terek Sandpiper winters mainly on eastern and southern coasts, from the Red Sea to South Africa and Namibia (Urban *et al.* 1986). Some trans-Saharan passage is indicated by rare but regular autumn appearances at desert pools in central Chad, and August–September records from the Lake Chad area in Nigeria (Cramp 1983). These vagrants probably winter on the West African coast, which premise is supported by records (of 1–5 birds) from Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana (Borrow & Demey 2001), Togo (Cheke & Walsh 1996), Benin (M. Poot pers. obs.) and Nigeria (Elgood *et al.* 1994).

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<sup>a</sup>Working Group International Waterbird and Wetland Research (WIWO), Rijksweg 178, 6573 DG Beek-Ubbergen, Netherlands. E-mail: jvdwinden@hetnet.nl

<sup>b</sup>Conservation Society of Sierra Leone, CSSL, PO Box 1292, Freetown, Sierra Leone. E-mail: alhajisiaka@yahoo.com

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# First record of Collared Flycatcher *Ficedula albicollis* for Togo

Sharon Merz<sup>a</sup>, Johannes Merz<sup>a</sup> and Deborah H. Hatfield<sup>b</sup>

Première mention du Gobemouche à collier *Ficedula albicollis* pour le Togo. Le 22 avril 2006, un Gobemouche à collier *Ficedula albicollis* a été observé près des rapides de la Kara, à l'est du village de Landa-Pozanda, au nord du Togo (09°31'N 01°17'E). Il s'agissait d'un mâle en plumage nuptial et ceci constitue la première donnée pour le pays.

On 22 April 2006, we paid an early-morning visit to the Kara River rapids east of the village of Landa-Pozanda in northern Togo (09°31'N 01°17'E). Around 07.45 hrs, having left the immediate vicinity of the river, whilst traversing the wooded Guinea Savanna typical of the area, SM spotted a small black-and-white flycatcher perched low in an almost leafless tree c.20 m distant. We watched it for several minutes through binoculars in excellent light, with the sun behind us. Initially the bird perched facing away from us, then, before flying off north, it turned permitting good views of the head pattern.

Locally common species, such as Brown-throated Wattle-eye *Platysteira cyanea*, Northern Puffback *Dryoscopus gambensis* and Senegal Batis *Batis senegalensis*, all familiar to us, were eliminated immediately. The bird resembled a Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*, a common Palearctic migrant which SM and JM have observed regularly in similar habitat in northern Benin, both during the dry season, in November–February, and during autumn and spring passages. However, it differed from the latter in having a distinct white forehead patch, a white lower back and an unbroken white collar on the hindneck. The latter is a diagnostic feature of adult male Collared Flycatcher *F. albicollis* (Svensson *et al.* 1999). Pied Flycatcher lacks this collar and also has a less striking forehead patch. Semi-collared Flycatcher *F. semitorquata* only possesses a half-collar and winters in East Africa, with no certain records in Western Africa (Borrow & Demey 2001).

Collared Flycatcher winters south of the equator, but its range in Africa is poorly known (Urban *et al.* 1997). In western Africa, the species is a rare to scarce passage migrant, with records from Niger (Aïr), northern Nigeria, Chad, Central African Republic and northern Congo, whilst others from Senegal and Mali are unsubstantiated, and claimed specimens from Ghana have been proven to be misidentified Pied Flycatchers (Urban *et al.* 1997, Borrow & Demey 2001). This record is thus the first for Togo (Cheke & Walsh 1996).

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<sup>a</sup>BP 45, Tanguiéta, Republic of Benin. E-mail: Johannes-Sharon\_Merz@sil.org

<sup>b</sup>BP 1525, Lomé, Togo. E-mail: Debbie\_Hatfield@sil.org

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# African Finfoot *Podica senegalensis* foraging in association with Nile Crocodile *Crocodylus niloticus*

Derek Engelbrecht

Grèbifoulque *Podica senegalensis* cherchant de la nourriture en association avec un Crocodile du Nil *Crocodylus niloticus*. En Afrique du Sud, un Grèbifoulque *Podica senegalensis* a été observé qui suivait un crocodile pour se nourrir des invertébrés aquatiques dérangés par les mouvements de ce dernier. Ce type de comportement a été noté chez d'autres espèces aquatiques comme le Jacana à poitrine dorée *Actophilornis africanus*, en association avec des crocodiles ou éléphants. Note éditoriale: au Congo-Brazzaville des Grèbifoulques ont été vus se nourrissant autour ou même sur des Buffles de forêt *Syncerus caffer*.

On 30 July 2006, while watching a female African Finfoot *Podica senegalensis* foraging at Muirhead Dams, Limpopo Province, South Africa, I observed a Nile Crocodile *Crocodylus niloticus* swimming towards the shallow water at the inlet of the dam. On noticing the crocodile, the finfoot immediately changed course and swam fairly rapidly towards the crocodile, which was

c.40 m away. At this stage the crocodile had reached the shallow water and was slowly wading through the mud. The finfoot followed closely in its wake, catching aquatic invertebrates disturbed by the crocodile's movements (Fig. 1). Although foraging opportunism is commonly reported for, e.g., Cattle Egrets *Bubulcus ibis* and Fork-tailed Drongos *Dicrurus adsimilis*, which



Figure 1. Female African Finfoot *Podica senegalensis* feeding on aquatic invertebrates disturbed by a Nile Crocodile *Crocodylus niloticus*, Muirhead Dams, Limpopo Province, South Africa, 30 July 2006 (Derek Engelbrecht)

Grèbifoulque *Podica senegalensis* femelle capturant des invertébrés aquatiques dérangés par les mouvements d'un Crocodile du Nil *Crocodylus niloticus*, Muirhead Dams, Limpopo Province, Afrique du Sud, 30 juillet 2006 (Derek Engelbrecht)

associate with grazing animals (Hockey *et al.* 2005), this is, as far as I can establish, the first documented record of foraging opportunism by an African Finfoot. Pitman (1962) describes a similar incident from Uganda, in which an African Jacana *Actophilornis africanus* 'with butterfly-wise flicks of its wings' skipped across the backs of two crocodiles to seize aquatic organisms disturbed by another crocodile moving through a shallow pool covered by floating vegetation. In Kenya, the same author observed a dozen jacanas following an African Elephant *Loxodonta africana* foraging in the shallows of a swamp, to feed on the aquatic life that was disturbed.

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*School of Molecular and Life Sciences, University of Limpopo, PO Box 446, Fauna Park, 0787, South Africa.*  
*E-mail: fauna.pburg@mindsmail.co.za*

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**Editorial comment.**—This note elicited the following comment by F. Dowsett-Lemaire: 'In Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park, in northern Congo-Brazzaville, several African Finfoots were observed feeding around a group of Forest Buffalo *Syncerus caffer* in a forest pool. Some even clambered onto the buffaloes to take small prey (?insects) (Richard Ruggiero pers. comm. to FD-L in 1996).'



# The avifauna of Cangandala National Park, Angola

Michael S. L. Mills<sup>a,b</sup>, Pedro vaz Pinto<sup>c</sup> and W. Richard J. Dean<sup>b</sup>

**L'avifaune du Parc National de Cangandala, Angola.** Le Parc National de Cangandala, au centre-nord de l'Angola, couvre 60,000 ha et consiste principalement de forêt claire à *Brachystegia-Julbernardia*. En 1972 et 1973, 161 espèces ont été observées sur ce site, qui par la suite a été identifié comme Zone d'Importance pour la Conservation des Oiseaux. Suite à des visites entre 2003 et janvier 2008, le nombre d'espèces observées a atteint 231, dont 20 espèces confinées au biome Zambézien. Le site comporte plusieurs espèces d'intérêt pour les ornithologues, parmi lesquelles divers spécialistes du Miombo, comme le Francolin de Finsch *Francolinus (Scleroptila) finschi*, l'Éremomèle à cou noir *Eremomela atricollis* et le Gobemouche de Böhm *Muscicapa boehmi*. Le parc, dont l'accès est à présent limité, deviendra probablement un site important pour l'observation des oiseaux une fois qu'il sera ouvert aux visiteurs.

**Summary.** Cangandala National Park, in north-central Angola, covers 60,000 ha and consists mainly of broad-leaved *Brachystegia-Julbernardia* woodland. In 1972 and 1973, 161 species were recorded at this site, which was subsequently identified as an Important Bird Area. Visits between 2003 and January 2008 have raised this total to 231, including 20 species restricted to the Zambezian biome. The site supports several species of interest to birdwatchers, including a high diversity of Miombo specialists, such as Finsch's Francolin *Francolinus (Scleroptila) finschi*, Black-necked Eremomela *Eremomela atricollis* and Böhm's Flycatcher *Muscicapa boehmi*. Although access is currently restricted, it is likely to become an important birdwatching site in the future.

Cangandala National Park (CNP), Angola's smallest national park (60,000 ha; Fig. 1) and now perhaps best known as the site where Giant Sable Antelope *Hippotragus niger variani* was rediscovered in 2005 by PVP and co-workers (Pitra *et al.* 2006; Fig. 2), is recognised as an Important Bird Area (IBA; Dean 2001). It is situated on the Angolan plateau at c.1,000 m in north-central part of the country (09°47'S 16°41'E), near the town of Malanje, capital of Malanje province. It is largely covered by broad-leaved woodland dominated by *Brachystegia* and *Julbernardia* species (Fig. 1), and harbours a significant component of those birds confined to the Zambezian biome (Fishpool & Evans 2001), with 13 of the 48 species that occur in Angola reported from this site (Dean 2001). Other habitats include papyrus swamps, broad-grassy drainage lines/dambos and gallery forest (see Dean 2001 for further details).

As is the case with most sites in Angola, the avifauna of CNP is poorly known. All previously published records are from August 1972 and September 1973, when WRJD visited the park for a total of two weeks, and some records from Merle & Brian Huntley (see Dean *et al.* 1988, Dean 2000). Nonetheless, these few observations were

sufficient for CNP to be recognised as an IBA (Dean 2001).

Our aim here is to update knowledge of the birds of this IBA and provide information on access to the park. New records include: (i) species recorded by PVP during c.20 visits between September 2003 and January 2008, (ii) species mist-netted along the Ombe River in gallery forest and adjacent woodland by PVP in October 2005, and (iii) species recorded on 7–9 August 2006 by MSLM and PVP.

## Results and Discussion

A list of all bird species recorded in CNP is presented in Table 1. Dean (2001) states that 170 species have been recorded, but several of these records could not be verified and have been omitted here. Since the park's identification as an IBA, the list has grown from 161 to 231 species—an increase of 43%, further validating its ornithological importance. Dean (2001) lists 13 species restricted to the Zambezian biome (species having 70% or more of their range within this biome: Fishpool & Evans 2001; see Table 1). We report on an additional seven species (Table 2), bringing the total to a minimum of 20 species. Other species that may be found in the future include

**Table 1.** List of the birds of Cangandala National Park, Angola.

1 = species recorded by WRJD in August 1972 (110 species); 2 = species recorded by WRJD in September 1973 (153 species); 3 = species recorded during c.25 visits by PVP between September 2003 and January 2008 (126 species); 4 = species mist-netted by PVP in October 2005 (16 species; numbers of individuals indicated); 5 = species recorded by MSLM during c.12 hours of daylight observations in August 2006 (113 species; approximate numbers indicated). Species restricted to the Zambezi biome (Fishpool & Evans 2001) are indicated by an asterisk.

**Tableau 1.** Liste des oiseaux du Parc National de Cangandala, Angola.

1 = espèces observées par WRJD en août 1972 (110 espèces); 2 = espèces observées par WRJD en septembre 1973 (153 espèces); 3 = espèces observées lors d'environ 25 visites de PVP entre septembre 2003 et janvier 2008 (126 espèces); 4 = espèces capturées au filet japonais par PVP en octobre 2005 (16 espèces; le nombre d'individus est indiqué); 5 = espèces observées par MSLM sur un total d'environ 12 heures en août 2006 (113 espèces; les nombres approximatifs sont indiqués). Les espèces confinées au biome Zambézien (Fishpool & Evans 2001) sont marquées d'un astérisque.

Common name	Scientific name	1	2	3	4	5
Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>		x			
Green-backed Heron	<i>Butorides striata</i>			x		
Goliath Heron	<i>Ardea goliath</i>			x		
Hamerkop	<i>Scopus umbretta</i>		x			
African Openbill	<i>Anastomus lamelligerus</i>	x	x			
Abdim's Stork	<i>Ciconia abdimii</i>		x			
Woolly-necked Stork	<i>Ciconia episcopus</i>			x		
Marabou Stork	<i>Leptoptilos crumeniferus</i>			x		
Spur-winged Goose	<i>Plectropterus gambensis</i>			x		
Knob-billed Duck	<i>Sarkidiornis melanotos</i>			x		
African Pygmy Goose	<i>Nettapus auritus</i>			x		
Bat Hawk	<i>Macheiramphus alcinus</i>			x		
Black-shouldered Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>			x		
Yellow-billed Kite	<i>Milvus [migrans] parasitus</i>	x	x			2
Palm-nut Vulture	<i>Gypohierax angolensis</i>	x	x			
White-headed Vulture	<i>Trigonoceps occipitalis</i>	x	x			
Black-breasted Snake Eagle	<i>Circaetus pectoralis</i>	x	x			1
Brown Snake Eagle	<i>Circaetus cinereus</i>	x	x	x		
Western Banded Snake Eagle	<i>Circaetus cinerascens</i>	x	x			
Bateleur	<i>Terathopius ecaudatus</i>	x	x	x		5
African Harrier Hawk	<i>Polyboroides typus</i>	x	x	x		
African Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus ranivorus</i>		x			
Gabar Goshawk	<i>Micronisus gabar</i>	x	x	x		
Dark Chanting Goshawk	<i>Melierax metabates</i>	x	x	x		1
African Goshawk	<i>Accipiter tachiro</i>	x	x			
Shikra	<i>Accipiter badius</i>		x			1
Black Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter melanoleucus</i>	x	x			
Lizard Buzzard	<i>Kaupifalco monogrammicus</i>		x	x		4
Wahlberg's Eagle	<i>Aquila wahlbergi</i>		x	x		
African Hawk Eagle	<i>Hieraaetus spilogaster</i>	x	x			
Long-crested Eagle	<i>Lophaetus occipitalis</i>	x	x			
Martial Eagle	<i>Polemaetus bellicosus</i>			x		
Grey Kestrel	<i>Falco ardosiaceus</i>					2
Eurasian Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>			x		
African Hobby	<i>Falco cuvierii</i>			x		?
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	x	x			
African Blue Quail	<i>Coturnix adansonii</i>		x			
Coqui Francolin	<i>Francolinus (Peliperdix) coqui</i>	x	x			
Finsch's Francolin	<i>Francolinus (Scleroptila) finschi</i>	x	x	x		
Red-necked Francolin	<i>Francolinus (Pternistis) afer</i>	x	x	x		2
Helmeted Guinea fowl	<i>Numida meleagris</i>	x	x			
Kurrichane Buttonquail	<i>Turnix sylvaticus</i>	x	x			
Red-chested Flufftail	<i>Sarothrura rufa</i>		x			1
African Water Rail	<i>Rallus caerulescens</i>		x			
Black Crane	<i>Amaurornis flavirostra</i>		x			
Black-bellied Bustard	<i>Lissotis melanogaster</i>		x			
Bronze-winged Courser	<i>Rhinoptilus chalcopterus</i>		x			4

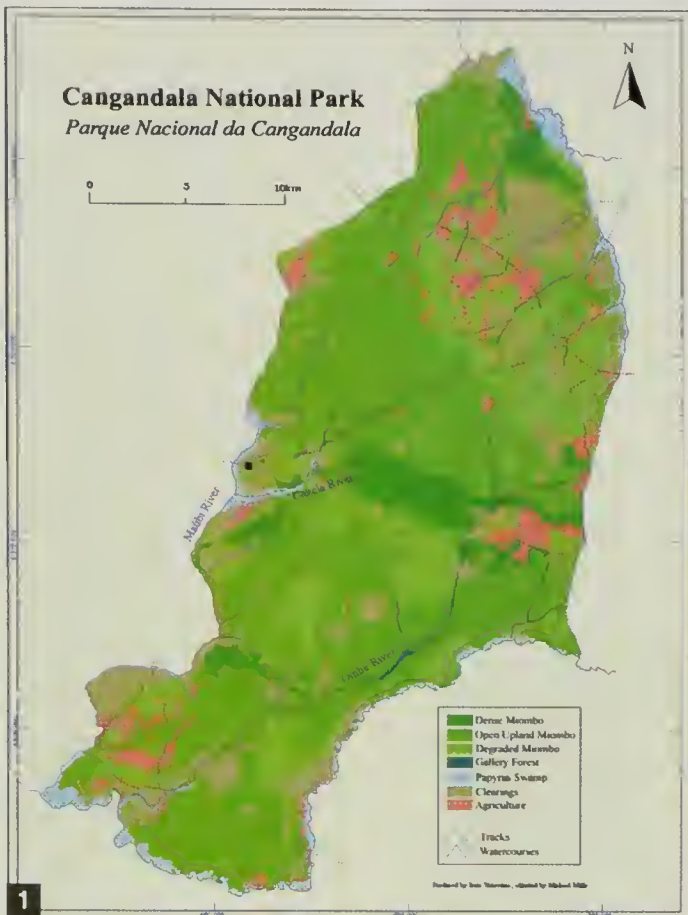


Lesser Black-winged Lapwing	<i>Vanellus lugubris</i>		x			
African Green Pigeon	<i>Treron calvus</i>	x	x	x		20
Tambourine Dove	<i>Turtur tympanistria</i>				2	
Emerald-spotted Wood Dove	<i>Turtur chalcospilos</i>	x	x	x		8
Red-eyed Dove	<i>Streptopelia semitorquata</i>	x	x	x		4
Cape Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia capicola</i>		x	x		12
Meyer's Parrot	<i>Poicephalus meyeri</i>	x	x	x		16
Schalow's Turaco	<i>Tauraco schalowi</i>	x	x	x		6
Ross's Turaco	<i>Musophaga rossae</i>			x		2
Jacobin Cuckoo	<i>Clamator jacobinus</i>	x		x		
Levaillant's Cuckoo	<i>Clamator levaillantii</i>		x			
Thick-billed Cuckoo	<i>Pachycoccyx audeberti</i>			x		6
Red-chested Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus solitarius</i>	x	x	x		1
Black Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus clamorus</i>	x	x			1
African Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus gularis</i>	x	x			9
Klaas's Cuckoo	<i>Chrysococcyx klaas</i>	x	x	x		
Didric Cuckoo	<i>Chrysococcyx caprius</i>	x	x	x		
Yellowbill	<i>Ceuthmochares aereus</i>			x		1
Coppery-tailed Coucal*	<i>Centropus cupreicaudus</i>		x			?1
White-browed Coucal	<i>Centropus superciliosus</i>	x	x	x		6
Black Coucal	<i>Centropus grillii</i>			x		
Senegal Coucal	<i>Centropus senegalensis</i>	x	x	x		
African Scops Owl	<i>Otus senegalensis</i>	x	x			2
Pearl-spotted Owlet	<i>Glaucidium perlatum</i>			x		
African Wood Owl	<i>Strix woodfordii</i>			x		
Marsh Owl	<i>Asio capensis</i>	x	x			
Swamp Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus natalensis</i>					4
Fiery-necked Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus pectoralis</i>	x	x	x		11
Pennant-winged Nightjar	<i>Macrodipteryx vexillarius</i>	x	x			6
African Palm Swift	<i>Cypsiurus parvus</i>			x		
Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>	x	x			
Narina's Trogon	<i>Apaloderma narina</i>					1
Brown-hooded Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon albiventris</i>	x				4
Grey-headed Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon leucocephala</i>	x	x	x		8
Woodland Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon senegalensis</i>	x				
Striped Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon chelicuti</i>	x	x			14
Malachite Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo cristata</i>			x		
Half-collared Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo semitorquata</i>			x		
Giant Kingfisher	<i>Megaceryle maxima</i>			x		
Pied Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>	x	x	x		
Little Bee-eater	<i>Merops pusillus</i>		x	x		4
Swallow-tailed Bee-eater	<i>Merops hirundineus</i>		x			
White-fronted Bee-eater	<i>Merops bullockoides</i>			x		
Blue-cheeked Bee-eater	<i>Merops persicus</i>			x		
European Bee-eater	<i>Merops apiaster</i>			x		
Southern Carmine Bee-eater	<i>Merops nubicoides</i>			x		
Rufous-crowned (Purple) Roller	<i>Coracias naevius</i>			x		
European Roller	<i>Coracias garrulus</i>			x		
Lilac-breasted Roller	<i>Coracias caudatus</i>	x	x			1
Broad-billed Roller	<i>Eurystomus glaucurus</i>	x	x	x		2
Green Wood-hoopoe	<i>Phoeniculus purpureus</i>	x	x			5
Black Scimitarbill	<i>Rhinopomastus aterrimus</i>	x	x			
Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops africana</i>	x	x	x		8
Southern Ground Hornbill	<i>Bucorvus leadbeateri</i>	x	x			2
Crowned Hornbill	<i>Tockus albotostratus</i>	x	x	x		8
Pale-billed Hornbill*	<i>Tockus pallidirostris</i>		x	x		12
Anchieta's Barbet*	<i>Stactolaema anchietae</i>	x	x	x		8
Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird	<i>Pogoniulus chrysoconus</i>	x	x	x		1
Black-collared Barbet	<i>Lybius torquatus</i>	x	x	x		2
Black-backed Barbet*	<i>Lybius minor</i>			x		
Green-backed Honeybird	<i>Prodotiscus zambesiae</i>	x	x			?
Brown-backed Honeybird	<i>Prodotiscus regulus</i>					2
Scaly-throated Honeyguide	<i>Indicator variegatus</i>		x			

Greater Honeyguide	<i>Indicator indicator</i>		x	x		1
Lesser Honeyguide	<i>Indicator minor</i>	x	x			1
Bennett's Woodpecker	<i>Campethera bennettii</i>		x			
Golden-tailed Woodpecker	<i>Campethera abingoni</i>	x	x	x		4
Cardinal Woodpecker	<i>Dendropicos fuscescens</i>	x	x			4
Bearded Woodpecker	<i>Dendropicos namaquus</i>		x			2
African Broadbill	<i>Smithornis capensis</i>		x	x	2	6
Flappet Lark	<i>Mirafraga rufocinnamomea</i>	x	x	x		1
Dusky Lark	<i>Pinarocorys nigricans</i>	x	x			7
Black Saw-wing	<i>Psalidoprocne pristoptera</i>	x	x			
Grey-rumped Swallow	<i>Pseudhirundo griseopyga</i>	x	x			
Mosque Swallow	<i>Cecropis senegalensis</i>			x		
Lesser Striped Swallow	<i>Cecropis abyssinica</i>	x	x	x		30
Red-throated Cliff Swallow*	<i>Petrochelidon rufigula</i>			x		
Angola Swallow	<i>Hirundo angolensis</i>	x	x			
Long-billed Pipit	<i>Anthus similis</i>	x	x			
Plain-backed Pipit	<i>Anthus leucophrys</i>		x			1
Black Cuckoo-shrike	<i>Campephaga flava</i>	x	x	x		6
White-breasted Cuckoo-shrike	<i>Coracina pectoralis</i>	x	x	x		8
Yellow-bellied Greenbul	<i>Chlorocichla flaviventris</i>		x			
Cabanis's Greenbul	<i>Phyllastrephus cabanisii</i>				13	
Common (Dark-capped) Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus barbatus tricolor</i>	x	x	x	6	40
Black-collared Bulbul	<i>Neolestes torquatus</i>					2
Grey-winged Robin Chat	<i>Cossypha polioptera</i>				3	
White-browed Robin Chat	<i>Cossypha heuglini</i>	x	x	x	4	2
Red-capped Robin Chat	<i>Cossypha natalensis</i>				17	
Miombo Scrub Robin*	<i>Cercotrichas barbata</i>	x	x	x	1	16
White-browed Scrub Robin	<i>Cercotrichas leucophrys</i>	x	x			1
African Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquatus</i>	x	x	x		4
Sooty Chat	<i>Myrmecocichla nigra</i>	x	x			
Arnot's Chat*	<i>Myrmecocichla arnoti</i>	x	x			
Kurrichane Thrush*	<i>Turdus libonyana</i>	x	x			
Little Rush Warbler	<i>Bradypterus baboecala</i>		x			4
African Moustached Warbler	<i>Melocichla mentalis</i>	x	x	x		
Broad-tailed Warbler	<i>Schoenicola brevirostris</i>	x	x	x		
Sedge Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>			x		
Greater Swamp Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus rufescens</i>		x			4
African Yellow Warbler	<i>Chloropeta natalensis</i>	x				1
Green-capped Eremomela	<i>Eremomela scotops</i>	x	x			20
Black-necked Eremomela*	<i>Eremomela atricollis</i>					16
Red-capped Crombec*	<i>Sylvietta ruficapilla</i>	x	x			2
Willow Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>			x		
Yellow-bellied Hyliota	<i>Hyliota flavigaster</i>		x	x		15
Red-faced Cisticola	<i>Cisticola erythrops</i>					12
Rattling Cisticola	<i>Cisticola chiniana</i>		x			
Chirping Cisticola*	<i>Cisticola pipiens</i>			x		10
Croaking Cisticola	<i>Cisticola natalensis</i>		x			1
Piping Cisticola	<i>Cisticola fulvicapilla</i>	x	x			60
Slender-tailed (Black-tailed) Cisticola*	<i>Cisticola melanurus</i>		x			
Tawny-flanked Prinia	<i>Prinia subflava</i>		x			30
Yellow-breasted Apalis	<i>Apalis flava</i>	x	x	x		4
Grey-backed Camaroptera	<i>Camaroptera brevicaudata</i>		x	x	1	1
Hartert's Camaroptera	<i>Camaroptera (brevicaudata) harterti</i>				1	
Miombo Wren Warbler*	<i>Calamonastes undosus</i>					6
Southern Black Flycatcher	<i>Melaenornis pammelaina</i>	x	x			4
Pale Flycatcher	<i>Bradornis pallidus</i>		x	x		
Spotted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>			x		
Ashy Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa caerulescens</i>	x	x			
Böhm's Flycatcher*	<i>Muscicapa boehmi</i>			x		2
Grey Tit Flycatcher	<i>Myioparus plumbeus</i>		x			10
African Paradise Flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone viridis</i>	x	x	x	6	20
Black-throated Wattle-eye	<i>Platysteira peltata</i>				4	
Chinspot Batis	<i>Batis molitor</i>	x	x	x		2



Arrow-marked Babbler	<i>Turdoides jardineii</i>	x	x			10
Hartlaub's Babbler*	<i>Turdoides hartlaubii</i>	x	x	x		
Miombo Grey Tit*	<i>Parus griseiventris</i>	x	x			
Rufous-bellied Tit*	<i>Parus rufiventris</i>			x		6
White-winged Black Tit	<i>Parus leucomelas</i>		x	x		1
Grey (African) Penduline Tit	<i>Anthoscopus caroli</i>					8
Western Violet-backed Sunbird	<i>Anthreptes longuemarei</i>			x		8
Amethyst Sunbird	<i>Chalcomitra amethystina</i>	x	x	x		1
Scarlet-chested Sunbird	<i>Chalcomitra senegalensis</i>					4
Variable Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris venustus</i>	x		x		
Yellow White-eye	<i>Zosterops senegalensis</i>			x		8
Common Fiscal	<i>Lanius collaris</i>		x	x		4
Souza's Shrike*	<i>Lanius souzae</i>		x	x		
Grey-headed Bush-shrike	<i>Malaconotus blanchoti</i>	x	x	x		5
Sulphur-breasted Bush-shrike	<i>Telophorus sulfureopectus</i>	x	x			2
Brubru	<i>Nilaus afer</i>		x			1
Black-backed Puffback	<i>Dryoscopus cubla</i>	x	x	x		20
Marsh (Anchietia's) Tchagra	<i>Tchagra minutus anchietae</i>			x		2
Brown-crowned Tchagra	<i>Tchagra australis</i>	x	x	x		1
Black-crowned Tchagra	<i>Tchagra senegalus</i>		x	x		8
Tropical Boubou	<i>Laniarius aethiopicus</i>	x	x	x		6
White-crested Helmetshrike	<i>Prionops plumatus</i>	x	x	x		30
Retz's Helmetshrike	<i>Prionops retzii</i>	x	x	x		3
Black-headed Oriole	<i>Oriolus larvatus</i>	x	x	x		20
African Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus auratus</i>	x	x	x		20
Square-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus ludwigii</i>		x	x		
Fork-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus adsimilis</i>		x	x		30
Pied Crow	<i>Corvus albus</i>			x		
Cape Glossy Starling	<i>Lamprotornis nitens</i>	x				
Sharp-tailed Glossy Starling*	<i>Lamprotornis acuticaudus</i>	x	x	x		20
Violet-backed Starling	<i>Cinnyricinclus leucogaster</i>	x	x	x		50
Wattled Starling	<i>Creatophora cinerea</i>					1
Yellow-throated Petronia	<i>Petronia superciliaris</i>		x	x		30
Red-headed Weaver	<i>Anaplectes rubriceps</i>		x			1
Spectacled Weaver	<i>Ploceus ocularis</i>			x		
Golden Weaver	<i>Ploceus xanthops</i>	x	x	x		
Lesser Masked Weaver	<i>Ploceus intermedius</i>			x		
Dark-backed Weaver	<i>Ploceus bicolor</i>				1	
Red-billed Quelea	<i>Quelea quelea</i>			x		
Yellow Bishop	<i>Euplectes capensis</i>	x	x	x		10
Yellow-mantled Widowbird	<i>Euplectes macroura</i>		x	x		
Marsh Widowbird	<i>Euplectes hartlaubi</i>			x		
Red-collared Widowbird	<i>Euplectes ardens</i>			x		
Fan-tailed Widowbird	<i>Euplectes axillaris</i>			x		
Grey Waxbill	<i>Estrilda perreini</i>				1	
Fawn-breasted Waxbill	<i>Estrilda paludicola</i>		x	x		
Common Waxbill	<i>Estrilda astrild</i>	x	x	x		
Black-bellied Seedcracker	<i>Pyrenestes ostrinus</i>				3	
Landana (Pale-billed) Firefinch	<i>Lagonosticta landanae</i>				1	30
Locust Finch	<i>Paludipasser locustella</i>		x			
Orange-breasted Waxbill	<i>Sporaeginthus subflavus</i>	x				
Bronze Mannikin	<i>Spermestes cucullatus</i>		x	x		20
Pin-tailed Whydah	<i>Vidua macroura</i>			x		
Broad-tailed Paradise Whydah*	<i>Vidua obtusa</i>	x		x		
Yellow-fronted Canary	<i>Serinus (Crithagra) mozambicus</i>	x	x			2
Cabanis's Bunting	<i>Emberiza cabanisi</i>	x	x			?2
Golden-breasted Bunting	<i>Emberiza flaviventris</i>					10
Cinnamon-breasted Bunting	<i>Emberiza tahapisi</i>		x			
<b>Totals</b>		<b>110</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>113</b>





**Table 2.** Species restricted to the Zambezian biome (Fishpool & Evans 2001) new to the Cangandala National Park bird list since Dean (2001). Observer initials in parentheses.

**Tableau 2.** Espèces confinées au biome Zambésien (Fishpool & Evans 2001) qui sont nouvelles pour le Parc National de Cangandala depuis Dean (2001). Entre parenthèses les initiales des observateurs.

Black-backed Barbet <i>Lybius minor</i>	uncommon in some gallery forests (PVP)
Red-throated Cliff Swallow <i>Hirundo rufigula</i>	several records, including a flock of a few hundred (PVP)
Chirping Cisticola <i>Cisticola pipiens</i>	c.10 individuals recorded in papyrus beds (MSLM)
Miombo Wren Warbler <i>Calamonastes undosus</i>	six individuals, recorded in most mixed-species flocks (MSLM)
Black-necked Eremomela <i>Eremomela atricollis</i>	present in almost every mixed-species flock (MSLM)
Böhm's Flycatcher <i>Muscicapa boehmi</i>	two seen in separate mixed-species flocks (PVP & MSLM)
Rufous-bellied Tit <i>Parus rufiventris</i>	present in most mixed-species flocks (PVP & MSLM)

Fülleborn's Longclaw *Macronyx fuellebornii*,  
Miombo Rock Thrush *Monticola angolensis* and  
Bannerman's Sunbird *Cyanomitra bannermani*.

Two species restricted to the Guinea-Congo  
Forests biome, Finsch's Francolin *Francolinus finschi* and Green Turaco *Tauraco persa*, have also

been reported (Dean 2001). However, the turaco  
is in fact the *schalowi* taxon, treated by Fishpool &  
Evans (2001) as a separate species, Schalow's  
Turaco *Tauraco schalowi*, which is not biome-  
restricted. The francolin is incorrectly considered  
as being restricted to the Guinea-Congo Forest

Captions to plates on opposite page

**Figure 1.** Map of Cangandala National Park, Angola (Luis Verissimo). The park is largely covered in Miombo wood-land, with pockets of gallery forest, grass-lined watercourses and papyrus swamp.

Carte du Parc National de Cangandala, Angola (Luis Verissimo). Le parc consiste principalement de forêt claire à *Brachystegia-Julbernardia*, avec quelques forêts galeries, des cours d'eau bordés de prairies humides et des marais de papyrus.

**Figure 2.** Giant Sable Antelope *Hippotragus niger variiani*, undated [1970s] (Brian Huntley). Although Cangandala National Park is most important for the conservation of Giant Sable Antelope, Angola's national mammal, it also holds a diverse array of bird species, including several species restricted to the Zambezian biome.

Hippotrague noir géant *Hippotragus niger variiani*, sans date (Brian Huntley). Le Parc National de Cangandala est crucial pour la conservation de cette espèce, le mammifère national de l'Angola, mais héberge également une avifaune diverse, dont plusieurs espèces confinées au biome Zambésien.

**Figure 3.** Dark-backed Weaver *Ploceus bicolor*, October 2005 (Pedro vaz Pinto). This weaver appears to be confined to gallery forest along the Ombe River.

Tisserin bicolore *Ploceus bicolor*, octobre 2005 (Pedro vaz Pinto). Ce Plocéidé semble être inféodée à la forêt galerie le long de la rivière Ombe.

**Figure 4.** Pennant-winged Nightjar / Engoulevent porte-étendard *Macrodipteryx vexillarius* (Phil Palmer / www.BirdHolidays.co.uk)

**Figure 5.** Black-bellied Seedcracker *Pyrenestes ostrinus*, October 2005 (Pedro vaz Pinto). This species appears to favour moister conditions along the Ombe River.

Pyréneste ponceau *Pyrenestes ostrinus*, octobre 2005 (Pedro vaz Pinto). Cette espèce semble préférer les zones humides le long de la rivière Ombe.

**Figure 6.** African Broadbill / Eurylaime du Cap *Smithornis capensis* (Hugh Chittenden)

**Figure 7.** Bronze-winged Courser / Courvite à ailes bronzées *Rhinoptilus chalcopterus* (Mark Anderson)

**Figure 8.** Pale-billed Hornbill / Calao à bec pale *Tockus pallidirostris* (Jon Hornbuckle)

**Figure 9.** Black-backed Barbet / Barbican de Levailant *Lybius minor* (Jon Hornbuckle)

biome, as most of its range lies in the Zambebian biome, and the species occurs only in woodland and open grassland. Thus CNP hosts no species restricted to the Guinea-Congo Forest biome.

### Information for visiting birders

This site holds great potential for birders, permitting safe (land-mine free) access to some pristine and diverse Miombo woodlands. Miombo species difficult to observe elsewhere include Pale-billed Hornbill *Tockus pallidirostris*, Anchieta's Barbet *Stactolaema anchietae*, Miombo Scrub Robin *Cercotrichas barbata*, Black-necked Eremomela *Eremomela atricollis*, Red-capped Crombec *Sylvietta ruficapilla*, Böhm's Flycatcher *Muscicapa boehmi*, Rufous-bellied Tit *Parus rufiventris* and Souza's Shrike *Lanius souzae*. Other sought-after species reliably found at the site include Finsch's Francolin *Fringilla (Scleroptila) finschi*, Bronze-winged Courser *Rhinoptilus chalcopiterus*, Pennant-winged Nightjar *Macrodipteryx vexillarius*, Black-backed Barbet *Lybius minor*, African Broadbill *Smithornis capensis*, Red-throated Cliff Swallow *Petrochelidon rufigula*, Black-collared Bulbul *Neolestes torquatus*, Grey-winged Robin Chat *Cossypha polioptera*, Chirping Cisticola *Cisticola pipiens*, Hartlaub's Babbler *Turdoides hartlaubii*, Marsh (Anchieta's) Tchagra *Tchagra minutus anchietae*, Sharp-tailed Glossy Starling *Lamprolornis acuticaudus* and Landana (Pale-billed) Firefinch *Lagonosticta landanae*. The status of the poorly known Slender-tailed (Black-tailed) Cisticola *Cisticola melanurus* is uncertain.

However, access to CNP is currently only possible by special invitation and, as some of the side roads are still mined, it is not advised to attempt to reach the park alone. Some of the infrastructure, including accommodation, has recently been restored, but there are no general tourist facilities yet. (This is set to change: for updates, please visit [www.birdsangola.org](http://www.birdsangola.org).)

Although only 52 km by road south-east of Malanje town, current road conditions mean it is a four-hour drive. The road is tarred, although very badly potholed, for the first 27 km, as far as

Cangandala village. The remaining 25 km is along narrow, eroded tracks, with many side roads making it likely that unaccompanied first-time visitors will become lost. Still, the woodland of CNP is largely undisturbed, and once access is possible it will be well worth the drive.

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<sup>a</sup>*Birding Africa*, 21 Newlands Road, Claremont 7708, Cape Town, South Africa.

<sup>b</sup>DST/NRF Centre of Excellence at the Percy FitzPatrick Institute, University of Cape Town, Rondebosch 7701, South Africa.

<sup>c</sup>Centro de Estudos e Investigação Científica UCAN, Rua Nossa Senhora da Muxima 29, CP 2064 Luanda, Angola.

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## Photospot: Three tiny pipits

Pete Leonard<sup>a</sup> and Hugh Chittenden<sup>b</sup>

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**Trois petits pipits.** Les photos reproduites ici montrent les trois pipits les plus petits de l'Afrique, qui sont également les pipits les plus difficiles à observer : le Pipit à queue courte *Anthus brachyurus*, le Pipit cafre *A. caffer* et le Pipit de Sokoke *A. sokokensis*.

**A**frica harbours the richest diversity of pipits *Anthus* spp. found on any continent and whilst there is still much to learn about them, most species are relatively easy to observe. The three smallest species, however, are secretive and far more difficult to watch, let alone photograph. Together, Short-tailed *Anthus brachyurus*, Bush *A. caffer* and Sokoke Pipits *A. sokokensis* form a separate clade (Peacock 2006).

### Short-tailed Pipit *Anthus brachyurus*

Short-tailed Pipit occurs from Gabon and Uganda south to South Africa. The species inhabits short, moist grassland, being often found in areas of sparse, new growth following a burn (Keith *et al.* 1992, Davies & Christian 2006), and it is the most terrestrial of the three species. Short-tailed Pipits are easily overlooked and a typical view is of a bird flushed from the ground with the appearance of a small lark or large cisticola (due to the relatively short tail). They tend to fly away rapidly and in a direct line, for up to 100 m before settling again. Sometimes, birds glide on stiff horizontal wings for short distances in the manner of a long-claw *Macronyx* sp., often looking 'back over their shoulder', presumably to check the source of disturbance. The white outer tail-feathers are sometimes visible during these glides as well as, occasionally, on take-off and landing.

Although often silent, birds sometimes call when flushed, a high-pitched *chwee* with a metallic timbre, an upward inflection and an overall quality very similar to the equivalent call of a Bush Pipit. Once this rather distinctive call is learnt, the species is easier to locate, not least because it also forms an important component of the song which is a typically pipit-like, regular series of simple and slightly monotonous notes, with a slight mechanical wing noise from time to time. Birds sing during display-flights which take the form of wide-

ranging circles, loops and 'figures of eight', in a slightly undulating circuit at a height of 10–25 m above ground. Such flights usually take place in the early morning and often before dawn.

One particularly interesting point, illustrated well in Fig. 1, is the occurrence of two distinct colour morphs in this species, some birds being whitish and others buff. In both the nesting pairs photographed by HC, the males were buff and the females white, but it remains unproven that the two colour morphs actually represent sexual dimorphism (Chittenden 2006).

### Bush Pipit *Anthus caffer*

Bush Pipit (or Bushveld, or Little Tawny Pipit) occurs from Ethiopia to South Africa. The species inhabits a variety of woodland types, ranging from *Acacia* bushveld to mature Miombo (*Brachystegia*), usually where the ground cover is fairly sparse with bare, sandy or even slightly rocky patches. Like the previous species, Bush Pipits are easily overlooked and can be difficult to find. However, when flushed they tend to fly to the nearest tree, making them easier to observe. In such circumstances, many birds then perch motionless for considerable periods, watching the observer and occasionally walking along larger branches before returning to the ground (Figs. 2–3).

Bush Pipits invariably call when flushed and, once learnt, this sound is invaluable when attempting to locate them. The note is similar to that of Short-tailed, being a buzzy, nasal *zshwee* with a marked upward inflection and it too also forms an important part of the species' disjointed song. Birds usually sing throughout the day in display-flights, high above the canopy. Such flights cover surprisingly large areas, perhaps explaining the low densities at which the species is often found.



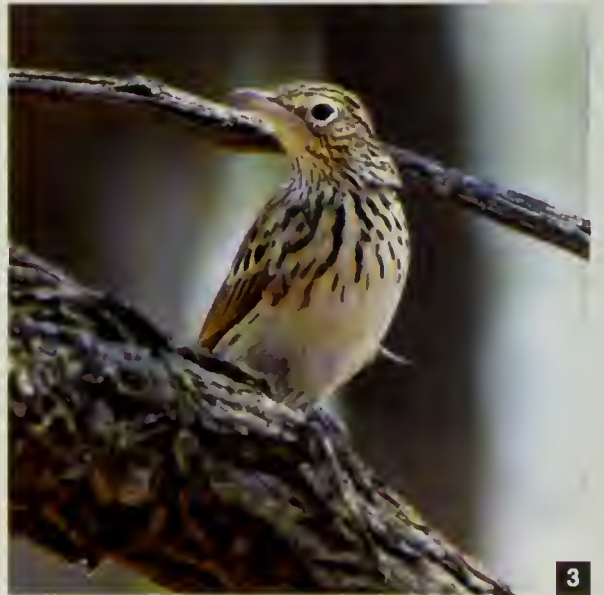






Figure 1. A breeding pair of Short-tailed Pipits *Anthus brachyurus* (female left, male right), Vernon Crookes Nature Reserve, KwaZulu Natal, South Africa, November 2006 (Hugh Chittenden)

Un couple de Pipits à queue courte *Anthus brachyurus* (la femelle à gauche, le mâle à droite), Réserve naturelle de Vernon Crookes, KwaZulu Natal, Afrique du Sud, novembre 2006 (Hugh Chittenden). Cette espèce comprend une forme blanchâtre et une forme chamois, bien illustrées dans cette photo.

Figures 2–3. Bush Pipit *A. caffer* of the nominate race, Mabusa area, Western Mpumalanga, South Africa, December 2006 (C. Moores)

Pipit cafre *A. caffer* de la sous-espèce nominale, zone de Mabusa, Mpumalanga de l'Ouest, Afrique du Sud, décembre 2006 (C. Moores). Les cinq ou six sous-espèces reconnues diffèrent principalement par le ton général des parties supérieures et l'étendue et la forme des stries au-dessus et en dessous. Les oiseaux appartenant à la sous-espèce nominale ont les parties supérieures brun chamois chaud et un croupion non rayé.

Figure 4. Bush Pipit of the race *A. c. blayneyi*, Tarangire National Park, Tanzania, no date (N. Baker)

Pipit cafre *A. caffer* de la sous-espèce *blayneyi*, Parc National de Tarangire, Tanzanie, sans date (N. Baker). Cette sous-espèce est-africaine a le croupion strié comme *A. c. traylori*, mais les parties supérieures sont plutôt chamois sable. Malgré le fait que *A. c. blayneyi* a normalement le ventre plus blanc que *A. c. caffer*, la photo reproduite ici montre que certains individus ont le dessous nettement plus sombre.

Figure 5. Bush Pipit of the race *A. c. traylori*, near Pretoriuskop, Kruger National Park, South Africa, April 2006 (N. Jackson)

Pipit cafre *A. caffer* de la sous-espèce *traylori*, près de Pretoriuskop, Parc National Kruger, Afrique du Sud, avril 2006 (N. Jackson). Cette sous-espèce, répartie du sud du Mozambique jusqu'à l'Afrique du Sud adjacente, a les parties supérieures plus pâles et plus froides que la sous-espèce nominale, et un croupion strié.

Figure 6. Sokoke Pipit *A. sokokensis*, Arabuko-Sokoke Forest, Kenya, no date (Steven Easley / Birdfinders)

Pipit de Sokoke *A. sokokensis*, Forêt d'Arabuko-Sokoke, Kenya, sans date (Steven Easley / Birdfinders). Le plumage de cette espèce a un pattern et des couleurs remarquables ; ceci contribue à rendre l'oiseau peu visible lorsqu'il cherche sa nourriture dans la litière.

Figure 7. Sokoke Pipit *A. sokokensis* eating a snail, Arabuko-Sokoke Forest, Kenya, August 2007 (S. Garvie & D. Ngala)

Pipit de Sokoke *A. sokokensis* mangeant un escargot, Forêt d'Arabuko-Sokoke, Kenya, août 2007 (S. Garvie & D. Ngala)

Figure 8. Sokoke Pipit *A. sokokensis* eating a spider, Arabuko-Sokoke Forest, Kenya, August 2007 (S. Garvie & D. Ngala)

Pipit de Sokoke *A. sokokensis* mangeant une araignée, Forêt d'Arabuko-Sokoke, Kenya, août 2007 (S. Garvie & D. Ngala)

Bush Pipits regularly join the mixed-species flocks so typical of their woodland habitat, and can be remarkably tame when cautiously approached. The most striking field marks are the pronounced pale eye-ring (Fig. 4) and the rufous fringes to the wing-feathers (Figs. 2, 5). Five or six subspecies are generally recognised, which differ mainly in the overall tone of the upperparts and the extent and shape of the streaking both above and below. Birds of the nominate race (Figs. 2–3), which range from south-east Botswana to Swaziland, are warm buff-brown above with unmarked rumps, whereas those of nearby race *traylori* (Fig. 5), which occurs from southern Mozambique to adjacent South Africa, have colder, paler, rather golden upperparts and streaked rumps. East African birds, *A. c. blayneyi* (Fig. 4), also have streaked rumps but their upperparts are more sandy-buff. Although this race has been described as having a whiter belly than nominate *caffer* (Keith *et al.* 1992), Fig. 4 suggests that at least some individuals can have considerably darker underparts.

### Sokoke Pipit *Anthus sokokensis*

This species is confined to a few small patches of coastal forest in Kenya and Tanzania. Such habitat is unusual for a pipit and although birds may be found in various forest types, they are most frequent in undisturbed primary forest (Fanshawe 1994). Sokoke Pipits spend much of their time foraging for invertebrates in the damp leaf litter of the forest floor, in a somewhat cautious and clockwork fashion (Fig. 8). As well as consuming ants, beetles, grubs and spiders (Fig. 8), birds are particularly adept at extracting snails from their shells (Fig. 7; S. Garvie *in litt.* 2007).

Many aspects of this species' behaviour are similar to those of the previous two. Birds are shy and tend to flush only at close range, flying into the understorey (usually 2–3 m up), and soon dropping back to the ground to resume feeding.

When flushed, they often utter a high-pitched wheezing *tseer* with a downward inflection, which note also forms a component of the very high-pitched song that is usually given in an undulating display-flight performed in a wide-ranging circuit above the canopy. Because of the enclosed nature of the forest, observers are rarely afforded good views of this behaviour (Fanshawe 1994).

The plumage of Sokoke Pipits is more strikingly patterned and richly coloured than many pipits. This is presumably an adaptation to aid camouflage amongst the similarly coloured leaf litter. Their upperparts are broadly streaked black and rufous, and the one or two white wingbars vary in prominence (Fig. 6). The underparts are white with bold and blotchy black streaks on the breast (Fig. 8).

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- <sup>a</sup>46 Trenchard Close, Newton, Nottingham NG13 8HG, UK. E-mail: [pleonard@care4free.net](mailto:pleonard@care4free.net)
- <sup>b</sup>Box 360, Eshowe 3815, South Africa. E-mail: [hugh@rarebirds.co.za](mailto:hugh@rarebirds.co.za)



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# Recent Reports



These are largely unconfirmed records published for interest only; records are mostly from 2007, with a few from earlier dates. We thank all birders who have sent in their records and urge them to submit full details to the relevant national or regional organisations. It is suggested that observations of each species be compared with relevant literature to set new data in context and that observers who are unfamiliar with the status of birds in a particular country refer to R. J. Dowsett's (1993) Afrotropical avifaunas: annotated country checklists (in R. J. Dowsett & F. Dowsett-

Lemaire. *A Contribution to the Distribution and Taxonomy of Afrotropical and Malagasy Birds*. Tauraco Res. Rep. 5. Liège: Tauraco Press) or more recent or appropriate sources before submitting records.

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Les observations ci-après sont en majeure partie non confirmées et sont publiées uniquement dans le but d'informer. La plupart des données sont de 2007 ; quelques-unes sont plus anciennes. Nous remercions tous les ornithologues qui ont pris la peine de nous faire parvenir leurs données et nous recomman-

dons de les envoyer, dûment documentées, aux organisations nationales ou régionales concernées. Il est conseillé de vérifier le statut des espèces observées dans la littérature appropriée, afin de mettre les nouvelles données en perspective, et de consulter notamment R. J. Dowsett (1993) Afrotropical avifaunas: annotated country checklists (in R. J. Dowsett & F. Dowsett-Lemaire. *A Contribution to the Distribution and Taxonomy of Afrotropical and Malagasy Birds*. Tauraco Res. Rep. 5. Liège: Tauraco Press) ou des sources plus récentes ou appropriées.

## Ascension

In 2007, Masked Boobies *Sula dactylatra* successfully re-colonised the main island; this was facilitated by the recent successful feral cat eradication programme. On 3 May, 186 pairs were incubating eggs on 'Letterbox' peninsula, on the remote eastern side. On 22 May, a second expedition from the Army Ornithological Society found 151 apparently occupied nests. Twelve



Figure 1. Pair of Masked Boobies *Sula dactylatra* at nest with day-old chick, Ascension Island, 22 May 2007 (Roger Dickey)

Couple de Fous masqués *Sula dactylatra* à leur nid contenant un poussin d'un jour, île de l'Ascension, 22 mai 2007 (Roger Dickey)

pairs had successfully hatched a chick (Fig. 1), one nest contained a predated egg and in another nest the egg was missing (both predated by rats). An Ascension Frigatebird *Fregata aquila* was found dead at Waterside on 21 May, entangled in nylon fishing line and a fish hook through the lower mandible. A European Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur* was seen at Travellers on 17 May; this is a new vagrant to the island (JHu).

## Azores

The following records are from May–November 2007. A subadult Black-browed Albatross *Thalassarche melanophrys* was photographed 5 km off Pico on 9 July. On 26 May, the first Black-capped Petrel *Pterodroma hasitata* for the Azores was photographed 16 km south-east of Graciosa; two Wilson's Storm-petrels *Oceanites oceanicus* were also photographed.

A first-year Double-crested Cormorant *Phalacrocorax auritus* was observed at Porto Formoso on 14 November. On São Miguel, American Bitterns *Botaurus lentiginosus* were found at Lagoa Azul on

30 September and at Ponta Delgada on 15 October. A Green Heron *Butorides virescens* was photographed on São Jorge on 23 October. The second Tricoloured Heron *Egretta tricolor* for the Azores, a first-winter, was at Praia de Agua de Alto, São Miguel, on 2 October; the first was on Pico in October 1985. Snowy Egrets *E. thula* were reported from Fajã dos Cubres, São Jorge, on 3 October, Fajã Grande, Flores, on 22 October, and Mosteiros, São Miguel, on 27 October, and American Great Egrets *E. alba egretta* from Flores, on 9 October to 21 November at least, Corvo on 17 October, São Miguel on 18 October and Terceira on 19 October. Great Blue Herons *Ardea herodias* were present on Corvo from 1 October to 15 November at least and on Flores from 12 to 18 October at least. Two Blue-winged Teals *Anas discors* were at Fajã dos Cubres, São Jorge, on 21 September and five American Black Ducks *A. rubripes* on Flores in October–November.

At Cabo da Praia, Terceira, a long-staying Semipalmated Plover *Charadrius semipalmatus* was present until at least late September; some



30 additional individuals were found in the archipelago in September–October. During the same period, about eight American Golden Plovers *Pluvialis dominica* were reported, whilst the first Pacific Golden Plover *P. fulva* for the Azores was at Cabo da Praia, Terceira, from 26 October.

'Peeps' included a Western Sandpiper *Calidris mauri* at Lagoa Azul, São Miguel, on 13 October, Semipalmated Sandpipers *C. pusilla* at Mosteiros, São Miguel, on 3 August, with another 20 at various locations in September–October; during the same period, c.6 Least Sandpipers *C. minutilla*, c.50 White-rumped Sandpipers *C. fuscicollis* and c.12 Pectoral Sandpipers *C. melanotos* (with one at Cabo da Praia, Terceira, on 24 August) were reported. The second Stilt Sandpiper *Micropalama himantopus* for the Azores was photographed at Fajã dos Cubres, São Jorge, on 7 October. Still in September–October, eight Wilson's Snipes *Gallinago (gallinago) delicata* and two Long-billed Dowitchers *Limnodromus scolopaceus* were recorded.

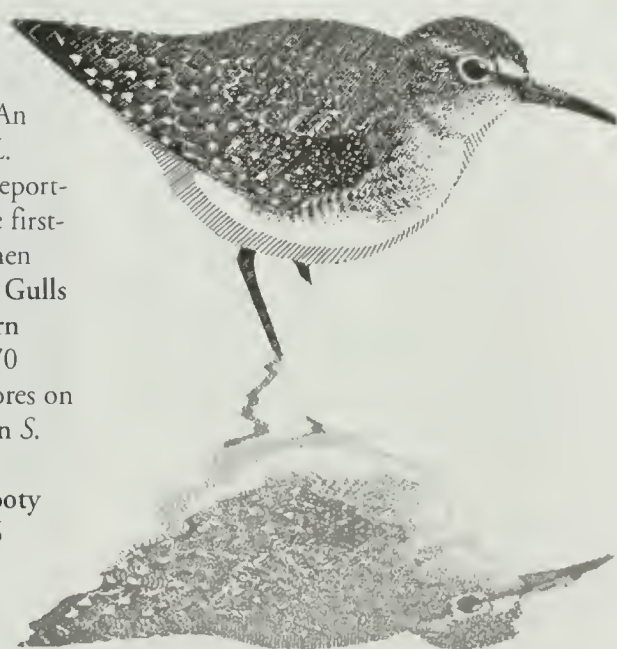
The first Hudsonian Godwit *Limosa haemastica* for the Azores was at Cabo da Praia, Terceira, on 25 July. Upland Sandpipers *Bartramia longicauda* were observed on Corvo on 31 October and on Flores on 21 November. Four Hudsonian Whimbrels *Numenius (phaeopus) hudsonicus* and c.11 Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes* were found in the archipelago in September–October. On Terceira, a Greater Yellowlegs *T. melanoleuca* was present at Cabo da Praia on 23–28 September. Solitary Sandpipers *T. solitaria* were seen at Cabo da Praia, Terceira, on 24 September, at Ponta Delgada, Flores, on 11 October, and at Lagoa dos Espraiaados, Achada das Furnas, São Miguel, on 25 October. A Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularius* was at Cabo da Praia, Terceira, on 21 August, and at least a further nine were at various locations in September–October. A Wilson's Phalarope *Phalaropus tricolor* was seen on Corvo on 17 October.

A first-summer Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis* was still in Ponta Delgada harbour, São Miguel, on 25 May. An adult American Herring Gull *L. (argentatus) smithsonianus* was reported on 2 August and at least one first-year in September–October, when there were also a few Laughing Gulls *L. atricilla* present. A Royal Tern *Sterna maxima* was observed 370 nautical miles south-west of Flores on 12 October and a Forster's Tern *S. forsteri* at Lajes, Flores, on 24 October. At least one of two Sooty Terns *S. fuscata* first seen on 16 June, on Ilhéu da Praia, Graciosa, and incubating an egg on 24 July, was still present on 6 September. A Bridled Tern *S. anaethetus* was on St Antonio on 21 June, whilst a first-year White-winged Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus* at Ponta Delgada, São Miguel, on 9 October is perhaps the first for the Azores. An Atlantic Puffin *Fratercula arctica* was seen two nautical miles south of Pico on 6 June.

In September–October, c.10 Yellow-billed Cuckoos *Coccyzus americanus* were reported. Common Nighthawks *Chordeiles minor* were found at Lajes do Pico, Pico, on 19 October, on Corvo on 25 October, and at Lomba da Fazenda, São Miguel, on 25 October (two). A Little Swift *Apus affinis* on Ilhéu da Vila, Santa Maria, on 18 November will be the first for the Azores, if accepted. A Belted Kingfisher *Megasceryle alcyon* was discovered at Lajes harbour, Flores, on 17 October.

In late October, Tree Swallows *Tachycineta bicolor*, a Grey-cheeked Thrush *Catharus minimus* and a Red-eyed Vireo *Vireo olivaceus* were observed on Corvo, the latter species was also seen on Flores. Six Common Linnets *Carduelis cannabina* at Lombo do Vasco, Sete Cidades, São Miguel, on 21 November, constitute yet another first for the Azores. Up to 14 Common Crossbills *Loxia curvirostra* stayed at Serra da Tronqueira, São Miguel, from 11 October to 27 November at least.

October records of New World warblers included a Black-throated



Solitary Sandpiper *Tringa solitaria*  
(Pete Leonard)

Green Warbler *Dendroica virens* photographed aboard a ship 188 nautical miles south-west of Flores on 11th, a Myrtle Warbler *D. coronata* at Ponta da Fajã, Flores, on 17th, and a Blackpoll Warbler *D. striata* at Sete Cidades, São Miguel, on 14th. Scarlet Tanagers *Piranga olivacea* were discovered on Corvo on 20 October and at Fajã Grande on 25 October. Also on Corvo, up to two Indigo Buntings *Passerina cyanea* were seen in late October. On Flores, two Bobolinks *Dolichonyx oryzivorus* stayed at Ponta Delgada from 4 October (per *Birding World* 20: 239, 326, 377; *Dutch Birding* 29: 239–245, 317–326, 383–400).

## Botswana

The following records are from the period June–December 2007, with one from March. On 22–23 July, 834 Great White Pelicans *Pelecanus onocrotalus* were counted on the Chobe River and its floodplain, 19 Pink-backed Pelicans *P. rufescens* at Shashe Dam, and 180 Greater Flamingos *Phoenicopterus (ruber) roseus* and 31 Lesser Flamingos *Phoeniconaias minor* at Bokaa Dam. Some 50 Slaty Egrets *Egretta vinga-ceigula* were on the Boro River on 14–15 July, 16 on Jao Flats on 17 July, and seven on the Chobe River on 22 July. On 17 June, 63 Maccoa

Ducks *Oxyura maccoa* were found at three sites, the largest count being 44 at Jwaneng Sewage Pond.

**Jackal Buzzards** *Buteo rufofuscus* have been noted at least four times since August. Of interest was an **Orange River Francolin** *Francolinus levaillantoides* heard near Oodi in November. During waterbird counts in the Okavango in July, 68 **Wattled Cranes** *Bugeranus carunculatus* were recorded at six sites. **Common Quail** *Coturnix coturnix* and **Burchell's Coursers** *Cursorius rufus* were observed at Lake Ngami on 29 July (MM, RR); the latter species was also found at Tshane Tshane Pan. **Grey Plovers** *Pluvialis squatarola* were reported from Bokaa Dam on 22 July (one), where there was also a **White-fronted Plover** *Charadrius marginatus*, and in the Liyanti at the mouth of the Savuti Channel on 24 November (two).

Two **Caspian Terns** *Sterna caspia* were seen at Shashe Dam on 30 September. **African Skimmers** *Rynchops flavirostris* were observed on the Okavango River near Shakawe on 7–8 August (39) and on the Chobe River on 22 July (42). Large numbers of **Grey-headed Gulls** *Larus cirrocephalus* were recorded, including 377 on the Chobe River on 22–23 July and 161 at Nata Delta.

A survey of **Short-clawed Lark** *Certhilauda chuana* in south-eastern Botswana in November–December found the species to be common on fallow fields north of Gaborone around Oodi and Kopong, between



Bokmakierie / Gladiatuer bocbakiri  
*Telophorus zeylonus* (Pete Leonard)

Molepolole and Thamaga, between Molepolole and Hatsalatladi, and further south around Ranaka and Ntlhantlhe. Two **Tree Pipits** *Anthus trivialis* were discovered at Chanoga, on the Boteti River south-east of Maun, on 18 November; this species is rare this far south. A **Bokmakierie** *Telophorus zeylonus* was near Nnywane Dam north of Lobatse on 9 March and a **Southern Boubou** *Laniarius ferrugineus* was heard along the Gamoleele River near Molepolole in December.

On 8 September, the first **Rose-coloured Starling** *Sturnus roseus* for Botswana was photographed at Mowana Safari Lodge, at Kasane, amongst a large group of **Wattled Starlings** *Creatophora cinerea* on the golf course; this irruptive species very rarely strays south to North Africa. Further down the Boteti at Leroo le Tau good numbers of **Cape Sparrows** *Passer capensis* were noted from 23–25 September; this sparrow is scarce in northern Botswana (CBr, MB, KD, PF, MG, HH, KH, KM, MM, RR, BR, RS, ST & MV per ST)

## Cameroon

Records from the immediate vicinity of Poli, North Province, in August–December 2007, include the following. A pale-headed **Ayres's Hawk Eagle** *Hieraaetus ayresii* was photographed on 25 November and 9 December (Fig. 2; p. 129). Two **Common Quails** *Coturnix coturnix* were recorded on 25 November, a **Spotted Thick-knee** *Burhinus capensis* on 9 December and two **Great Snipes** *Gallinago media* on 9 September. Between late October and mid December, over 20 **Adamawa Turtle Doves** *Streptopelia hypopyrrha* were found. A **Black-backed Cisticola** *Cisticola eximius* was singing on 9 and 16 September. At least three **Emin's Shrikes** *Lanius gubernator* and 40+ **Chad Firefinches** *Lagonosticta umbrinodorsalis* were regularly observed throughout the period, whilst at least one **Barka Indigobird** *Vidua larvaticola* was seen on 28 October and a **Baglaffeht Weaver** *Ploceus baglaffeht* on 27 November (NV).

Noteworthy records from a visit in October 2007 included the following. In Korup National Park, six **Grey-necked Picathartes** *Picathartes oreas*, including young, were seen, as well as a **Black-eared Ground Thrush** *Zoothera camaronensis* and a pair of **Rachel's Malimbe** *Malimbe racheliae* with nesting material. A **Mount Cameroon Francolin** *Francolinus camerunensis* was flushed from the grassy area below Hut 2 on Mt. Cameroon and a **Grey-chested Illadopsis** *Kakamega poliothorax* was seen feeding a juvenile just below Hut 1. Six **White-naped Pigeons** *Columba albinucha* were observed on Mt. Kupe, whilst an **Olive Ibis** *Bostrychia olivacea* was claimed from the Edea/Dizangue area, near the Sanaga River. An unexpected find at Ngaoundaba Ranch was a **Buff-spotted Flufftail** *Sarothrura elegans*, of which good views were obtained; this is well outside its known range in the country. Amongst the many European **Pied Flycatchers** *Ficedula hypoleuca* there was at least one bird that was thought to be a **Collared Flycatcher** *F. albicollis*. A **Dwarf Bittern** *Ixobrychus sturmii* was noted at Dang Lake; there are relatively few records of this widespread species in Cameroon. A flock of **Harlequin Quails** *Coturnix delegorguei*, a **White-throated Francolin** *Francolinus albogularis* and an **Emin's Shrike** were observed in Benoué National Park. In Waza National Park, an **African Hobby** *Falco cuvierii* was a good find; there is apparently only one previous record so far north. Also interesting was a **Savile's Bustard** *Lophotis savilei*, seen walking along a track at dusk; there are very few records in Cameroon of this species, all from Waza, where it was first recorded in 1994. Further records from Waza included **Cricket Warbler** *Spiloptila clamans* and **Masked Shrike** *Lanius nubicus*, whilst a **European Roller** *Coracias garrulus*, a rare Palearctic visitor, was found just outside the park north of Mora. Also north of Mora, at least six firefinches claimed as **Rock Firefinches** *Lagonosticta sanguinodorsalis* were seen at a huge rocky outcrop (CA).





Figure 2. Ayres's Hawk Eagle / Aigle d'Ayres *Hieraaetus ayresii*, Poli, North Province, Cameroon, 25 November 2007 (Nigel Voaden)

Five Grey-headed Gulls *Larus cirrocephalus* were observed on the Benoué at Garoua on 5 November. A male Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio* c.150 km south-east of Ngaoundere on 12 November was a good find; there are fewer than ten records for the country (NV). Species found breeding on Mt. Manengouba on 1 December included Oriole Finch *Linurgus olivaceus* (nest with three eggs 1 m above ground) and Bannerman's Weaver *Ploceus bannermani*. The discovery of Exclamatory Paradise Whydah *Vidua interjecta* (and Yellow-winged Pytilia *Pytilia hypogrammica*) near Bafia, West Province, in November 2007 constitutes a small range extension (JvdW).

### Canary Islands

Records from July–December 2007 include the following. A Northern Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis* was trapped by a fisherman at Agaete, Gran Canaria, on 7 October and released three days later (per *Dutch Birding* 29: 378). Two Fulvous Whistling Ducks *Dendrocygna bicolor* found at Embalse de Ciguaña, Tenerife, in late July 2007, were considered to be escapes. A first-winter Tricoloured Heron *Egretta tricolor*, the first for the islands if accepted, remained at Playa de las Canteras, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, from 15 November until 1 December at least (Fig. 3; per *Birding World* 20: 455). A Red Kite *Milvus milvus* was observed at Teide, Gran Canaria, on 8 July, and a pale-morph Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus* at Las Canteras,



Figure 3. Tricoloured Heron / Aigrette tricolore *Egretta tricolor*, Gran Canaria, Canary Islands, 1 December 2007 (John Cooper)

near La Laguna, Tenerife, on 11 July (per *Dutch Birding* 29: 315–317).

### Cape Verde Islands

A Red-footed Booby *Sula sula* was photographed 190 nautical miles north of the archipelago on 21 October 2007 (per *Dutch Birding* 29: 381). The first Baird's Sandpiper *Calidris bairdii* for the Cape Verdes was found at Santa Maria, Sal, on 20–22 October (per *Dutch Birding* 29: 383).

### Congo-Brazzaville

The following records were reported for the period June–December 2007. A Laughing Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis*, seen on a road in the Pokola logging concession, on the periphery of Nouabale-Ndoki National Park, northern Congo, on 30 June constitutes a new species for the country. An immature Isabelline Shrike *Lanius isabellinus* observed near Epena in Lac Tele Community Reserve on 12 November will also be a first for Congo-Brazzaville, if confirmed.

Other noteworthy records from Lac Tele include a Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo* on 10 November (this species is known from only three sites in Congo-Brazzaville), a Striped Crake *Aenigmatolimnas marginalis* on 5

December (third record here), a Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* on 2 December (first record in northern Congo) and a Red-capped Lark *Calendrella cinerea* on 11 November (second record for Congo-Brazzaville) (HR).

One thousand Royal Terns *Sterna maxima* on a sandbank in the Kouilou River mouth in early October is a large group at this site. During the same period, 30 African Skimmers *Rynchops flavirostris* were seen in Pointe Noir harbour, whilst Reichenbach's Sunbird *Anabathmis reichenbachii* was observed on the Lefini River, 500 km inland (JvdW).

### Egypt

In May–November 2007, the following were reported. In northern lake Nasser, three Pink-backed Pelicans *Pelecanus rufescens* and 12 Yellow-billed Storks *Mycteria ibis* were c.20 km north-east of Garf Husein on 23 May, whilst six Pink-backed Pelicans and 11 Yellow-billed Storks were at Abu Simbel on 26–27 June, and 20 and 101, respectively, on 17 July (per *Birding World* 20: 278; *Dutch Birding* 29: 242). A Striated Heron *Butorides striata* flew across the Nile at Zamalek on 27 November (per *Dutch Birding* 29: 381).

An Oriental Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhynchus* flew south-west over Sharm el Sheikh, south Sinai, on 27 October and 23 Lappet-faced Vultures *Torgos tracheliotus* were at



African Pied Wagtail / Bergeronnette pie *Motacilla aguimp* (Pete Leonard)





**Figure 4.** Desert Eagle Owl *Bubo ascalaphus* roosting on the terrace of a house, El Gouna, north of Hurgada, Egypt, 9 October 2007 (Edwin Winkel)

Grand-duc ascalaphe *Bubo ascalaphus* se reposant sur la terrasse d'une maison, El Gouna, au nord de Hurgada, Égypte, 9 octobre 2007 (Edwin Winkel)

Shalateen on 28 June (per *Birding World* 20: 278 & 455). A pair of **Bonelli's Eagles** *Hieraaetus fasciatus*, a rare resident, was seen at Sharm el Sheikh on 18–19 May (per *Sandgrouse* 29: 123). At Abu Simbel, three **African Skimmers** *Rynchops flavirostris* were observed on 26–27 June and 17 July (per *Birding World* 20: 278; *Dutch Birding* 29: 251). Two **Three-banded Plovers** *Charadrius tricollaris* were at Tut Amon on Lake Nasser, Aswan, on 25 October (per *Dutch Birding* 29: 383). At Hamata mangroves, a **Namaqua Dove** *Oena capensis* was seen on 25 June (per *Birding World* 20: 278). A **Desert Eagle Owl** *Bubo ascalaphus* was seen at night in the centre of El Gouna, north of Hurgada, and later photographed roosting on the terrace of a house during the day in early October (EW: Fig. 4).

Three **African Pied Wagtails** *Motacilla aguimp* were at Abu Simbel on 26–27 June. At Sharm el Sheikh, an **Oriental Skylark** *Alauda gulgula* and a **Siberian Buff-bellied Pipit** *Anthus rubescens japonicus* were found on 4 November (with another Buff-bellied Pipit over Ras Muhammed on 1st), and five **Richard's Pipits** *Anthus richardi* on 2nd. A **Yellow-browed Warbler** *Phylloscopus inornatus* was seen at St Katherine on 31 October and a 'Steppe' **Grey Shrike** *Lanius*

*meridionalis pallidirostris* at Nabq on 2 November (per *Birding World* 20: 278 & 455).

### Gabon

A **Broad-billed Sandpiper** *Limicola falcinellus* was observed on a sandbar at the Moka River mouth on 3 August 2007. At Mikongo, Lopé National Park, a **Brown Nightjar** *Caprimulgus binotatus* was found on 24–25 July; this is apparently the first record for this site. Also there, some unidentified swifts *Apus* sp. were once again encountered (cf. *Bull. ABC* 11: 72); they are blacker and smaller than Common Swift *A. apus* and frequently fan their tail whilst gliding—they are possibly **Fernando Po Swifts** *A. sladeniae*, although this form is supposed to be as large as Common Swift. A small flock of at least six **Red-billed Queleas** *Quelea quelea* frequented the grounds of Ipassa research station on 27–29 July; these appear to be the first for the area (NBo).

### The Gambia

Records from January–November 2007 include the following. Single **Abdim's Storks** *Ciconia abdimii* were seen over Kartong, Western Division (WD), on 26 May (JH) and Sabi, Upper River Division, on 19 July (KR). A flock of c.800 **White Storks** *C. ciconia* was at Illiassa and a second of c.650 near Farafenni, North Bank Division, in November (MC). A report from 14 October of two subadult **Egyptian Vultures** *Neophron percnopterus* over Kotu rubbish

dump, WD, with Hooded Vultures *Necrosyrtes monachus*, is the first for several years; only one previous record, from the early 1990s in Lower River Division, involves two individuals, all the others being of singles (KR). A **Lappet-faced Vulture** *Torgos tracheliotus* with 20+ Eurasian Griffon Vultures *Gyps fulvus* was photographed on the north bank on 25 November (MC). A **White-headed Vulture** *Trigonoceps occipitalis* flew over Sabi with griffon vultures *Gyps* spp. and two **Beaudouin's Snake Eagles** *Circaetus beaudouini* on 19 May (KR). An **Ayres's Hawk Eagle** *Hieraaetus ayresii* flew across the Gambia River near Tendaba Camp on 24 November (SB, PD; Figs. 5–6). A **White-bellied Bustard** *Eupodotis senegalensis*, the first for many years, was photographed on the north bank on 25 November (MC).

Some 400 pairs of **Grey-headed Gulls** *Larus cirrocephalus* investigated an ephemeral sandbar at Banjul, created by a beach reclamation project, on 13 March; many nest platforms were built and up to 20 pairs successfully raised young in July, making this the second breeding site for The Gambia, the other being the Bijol Islands in Tanji Bird Reserve (CB & LS). A record number of 17 **Kelp Gulls** *Larus dominicanus* was present at Tanji Bird Reserve, WD, on 29 October, amongst which five ringed individuals had originated from the Sine Saloum colony in Senegal (KR). At the same locality, colour-ringed **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** *L. fus-*



**Figures 5–6** Ayres's Hawk Eagle / Aigle d'Ayres *Hieraaetus ayresii*, near Tendaba Camp, The Gambia, 24 November 2007 (Peter Dedicoat)



cus from Norway and Spain were noted in November (CB & KR). Also there, a **Sooty Tern** *Sterna fuscata* was seen on 7 March, and a **Bridled Tern** *S. anaethetus* on 24 July; the latter at a roost with 1,000 Great White Pelicans *Pelecanus onocrotalus*. A **Roseate Tern** *Sterna dougallii* was photographed at Banjul on 21 November (MC). Thousands of **Black Terns** *Chlidonias niger* passed inshore Banjul from 30 August to 1 September; in 2006 their passage lasted over two weeks (CB). An **African Skimmer** *Rynchops flavirostris* at Tanji Bird Reserve on 13 September is a very rare beach record (KR); another was seen at Janjanbureh, Central River Division, on 24 November (MC).

An adult **Great Spotted Cuckoo** *Clamator glandarius* at Kotu, WD, on 10 February is a scarce mid dry-season sighting; an independent juvenile, still with gape flanges, was hunting hairy caterpillars at Radio Syd, Banjul, on 24 August (CB). A **Common Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus* was at Tanji Bird Reserve, WD, on 22 September; there are few recent records in the country (CB & KR). A **Yellowbill** *Ceuthmochares aereus* was heard at Brufut, WD, on 12 October (CB & RA), whilst a **Greyish Eagle Owl** *Bubo cinerescens* was seen regularly in a housing development at the same locality from 22 September into November; there are recent breeding reports from coastal Western Division.

The record of a female **Black-crowned Sparrow Lark** *Eremopterix nigriceps* included in the previous Recent Reports (Bull. ABC 14: 222) was not the first for The Gambia as stated, but the first with photographic proof; there are two previous claims. In the same issue, the Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe* reportedly photographed on 31 December 2006 was actually the fifth **Black-eared Wheatear** *O. hispanica* for the country (CB).

A male **Blue Rock Thrush** *Monticola solitarius* in fresh plumage was photographed on Brufut cliffs near Tanji Bird Reserve, WD, on 14 October (Fig. 7); this is the first



**Figure 7.** Blue Rock Thrush / Monticole merle-bleu *Monticola solitarius*, Brufut cliffs, near Tanji Bird Reserve, Western Division, The Gambia, 14 October 2007 (Roy Armstrong/Project Gambia)

report for several years (RA, CB, KR). A **Sedge Warbler** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* mist-netted at Kartong, WD, on 22 August and a juvenile **Common Whitethroat** *Sylvia communis* on 24 August are early records (JH). A **Brown-necked Raven** *Corvus ruficollis* at Tanji fish-landing site on 29 October constitutes the first record for some years; all previous ones are from the Banjul area in the dry season (KR). Regarding the first **Common Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris* for The Gambia, seen at Tendaba airfield on 13 January (Bull. ABC 14: 222), CB notes that a growing number of cruiseships from southern Europe sail up to the Tendaba area of the Gambia River, increasing the possibility of ship-assisted birds arriving in the country.

#### Ghana

Excellent views of a **Spot-breasted Ibis** *Bostrychia rara* feeding in swampy forest were obtained at Kalakpa on 19 August 2007 (DS). Three **American Golden Plovers** *Pluvialis dominica* were recorded at Sakumo Lagoon, near Accra, on 3 November. In August, up to four **Cuckoo Finches** (Parasitic Weavers) *Anomalospiza imberbis* were found near Pram Pram, east of Accra; also there, a **Swamp Nightjar** *Caprimulgus natalensis* was flushed

(AH). A **Yellow-footed Honeyguide** *Melignomon eisentrauti* was heard in Atewa Range Forest Reserve on 18 December (LF).

#### Kenya

The following records are from November 2006–May 2007 unless otherwise stated. A **Long-tailed Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax africanus* in the Masai Mara on 17 February is a very unusual record for this site. On 25 November, only 20 **Great White Pelicans** *Pelecanus onocrotalus* were counted at Lake Nakuru, compared to an estimated 150,000 on the same date in 2005. An adult **White-backed Night Heron** *Gorsachius leuconotus* was in Nairobi National Park (=NP) on 24 January and a **Little Bittern** *Ixobrychus minutus* on the Lower Kabete, Nairobi, on 6 December, whilst **Dwarf Bitterns** *I. sturmii* were seen at Lake Jilore, Malindi, on 31 January (five), Nginyang, Lake Baringo, on 25 April (four), and Kichwa Tembo, Masai Mara, on 2 May (one). On 16 April, 500 **Abdim's Storks** *Ciconia abdimii* were counted at Ol Tepesi, Magadi Road.

In April, **Eurasian Honey Buzzards** *Pernis apivorus* were reported from Ngong Forest, Nairobi, on 4th (one), Shimba Hills on 10th (two) and the Kongelai Escarpment on 27th (a group of six). An **African Cuckoo Hawk** *Aviceda cuculoides* was seen at Nguuni, near Mombasa, on 2 December, and a **Short-toed Snake Eagle** *Circaetus gallicus* was photographed near Malindi on 12 April. An entirely melanistic adult **Ovambo Sparrowhawk** *Accipites ovampensis* was observed at Lake Nakuru NP on 23 November; at the Ooloolo Escarpment, Masai Mara, young fledged on 2 May. An adult **Long-legged Buzzard** *Buteo rufinus* was



**African Cuckoo Hawk / Baza coucou** *Aviceda cuculoides* (Pete Leonard)

along the road near Mweiga on 23 November, whilst a **Greater Spotted Eagle** *Aquila clanga* was at Lake Nakuru NP on 25 November and a **Saker Falcon** *Falco cherrug* at the sewage ponds in Nakuru NP on 23 February. Along the coast, from Likoni, Mombasa, to Sabaki, **Eurasian Hobbies** *F. subbuteo* were recorded in twos and threes on 10–21 April. Two adult male **Red-footed Falcons** *F. vespertinus* were near Lake Jipe on 14 April; this species is rare in East Africa. Eight **Amur Falcons** *F. amurensis* were on the beach at Watamu on 15 April; it is quite unusual to see falcons at the coast and only when weather conditions force them down during migration.

An adult male **African Blue Quail** *Coturnix adansonii* was flushed from tall wet grass along a track in the Ndara Plains, Tsavo East NP, on 29 December; there are few records of this species in recent years. Two **Buff-spotted Flufftails** *Sarothrura elegans* were calling from a *Lantana* thicket at Wajee Camp, Kirinyaga, on 18 April. A **Corn Crane** *Crex crex* was at Ol Doinyo Sabuk NP on 14 January and **Lesser Moorhens** *Gallinula angulata* were found in a suburb of Nairobi on 29 November (one) and at Nginyang, Lake Baringo, on 25 April (two). A **Temminck's Courser** *Cursorius temminckii* at Gongoni, north of Malindi, on 12 April, is an uncommon species on the coastal strip. A single **Black-winged Pratincole** *Glareola nordmanni* was observed with some **Collared Pratincoles** *G. pratincola* at Amboseli NP on 19 November; the former is a very uncommon species in Kenya. Three **Temminck's Stints** *Calidris temminckii* were at Hippo Point, Lake Nakuru, on 25 November and a **Great Snipe** *Gallinago media* at Nambale, Busia, on 30 April. On 29 March, a **Sandwich Tern** *Sterna sandwicensis* was observed at Tudor Creek, Mombasa.

Eight **Grey Parrots** *Psittacus erithacus* were seen in Rondo Retreat gardens, Kakamega, on 27 April. A large movement of **Common Cuckoos** *Cuculus canorus* occurred

over at least central and eastern Kenya from the first week of April to about the 25th; an estimated 1,000 birds moved through in just 3–4 hours at Mida Creek, at the coast, on 21st. Larger numbers of **Asian Lesser Cuckoos** *C. poliocephalus* than in most years also moved along the coast in mid April. A **Black Coucal** *Centropus grillii* was found in Nairobi NP on 15 November; this is far out of range, the nearest records being from the Masai Mara. A pair of **African Grass Owls** *Tyto capensis* at a nest with two chicks at Mweiga on 23 April constitutes a rare record for this species. A male **Star-spotted Nightjar** *Caprimulgus stellatus* was found dead on the road in Shaba Reserve on 22 April; this species has not previously been confirmed from the area. At Gongoni, north of Malindi, a **Nubian Nightjar** *C. nubicus* was found roosting on 12 April; an unusual species on the coast.

A **Shining-blue Kingfisher** *Alcedo quadribrachys* was seen at Adungosi, western Kenya, at the same site where it was first discovered c.10 years ago but has rarely been reported since. A **Somali Bee-eater** *Merops revoilii* was seen carrying food, as if breeding, at Maktau gate, Tsavo West NP, on 14 April; an unusual record if it was nesting. A juvenile **Green-backed (Eastern) Honeybird** *Prodotiscus zambesiae* was being fed by a pair of **Abyssinian White-eyes** *Zosterops abyssinicus* at Nairobi on 29 November.

The little-known **Friedmann's Lark** *Mirafra pulpa* was found to be fairly numerous in Shaba Reserve on 22 April. Twenty **Sharpe's Longclaws** *Macronyx sharpei* counted in a small area, at South Kinangop, on 17 April, constitutes an unusual concentration for this threatened species. A male **Black-eared Wheatear** *Oenanthe hispanica* was at seen Solio Ranch, Laikipia, on 10 December. On 25 February, a **Basra Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus griseldis* was singing at Lake Baringo. Single **Common Chiffchaffs** *Phylloscopus collybita* were reported from the Isiolo Junction area, Timau, on 20 February (singing); the Taita Hills on 13 April,



Orange-winged Pytilia /  
Beaumarquet à dos jaune *Pytilia afra*  
(Pete Leonard)

and at the Naro Moru entrance to Mt. Kenya NP on 19 April. A single **Wood Warbler** *P. sibilatrix* was found among **Willow Warblers** *P. trochilus* at Serena Hotel, Samburu Game Reserve, on 21 April. A **Masked Shrike** *Lanius nubicus* remained at Lake Baringo from 25 November until late December at least. A **Purple Starling** *Lamprolornis purpureus* was at the Sio River on 29 April. A **Golden-breasted Starling** *L. (Cosmopsarus) regius* 2 km beyond Sultan Hamud on the main Mombasa road, on 16 November, is at the western limit of this species' range.

Six **Rufous-tailed Weavers** *Histurgops ruficaudata* on Koiaki, Masai Mara, on 2 May, perhaps constitute the first record for Kenya of this Tanzanian endemic. At Lower Kabete, Nairobi, 100+ **Jackson's Widowbirds** *Euplectes jacksoni* were counted on 6 December. A pair of **Orange-winged Pytilias** *Pytilia afra* was found at Lewa Conservancy, Laikipia, on 9 August 2006 and several birds photographed at Ol Doinyo Sabuk NP on 14 January; this species has not been reported from central Kenya for many decades (per CJ).

### Madagascar

An adult **Sooty Gull** *Larus hemprichii*, presumably the same individual returning for its third (?) year, was observed on Nosy Ve, off the south-west coast, on 18 October 2007. On the coast near Tulear, a **Lesser Sand Plover** *Charadrius mongolus* was seen on 15 and 17 October (JE).



## Madeira

Records from June–November 2007 include the following. A singing **Swinhoe's Storm-petrel** *Oceanodroma monorhis* reported from Selvagem Grande, in June and on 19–21 August, appeared to be the same individual as was ringed on this islet on 8 July 1983; previous records from this location were in June–July 1983, 1988, 1991 and 1993–95. A **White Stork** *Ciconia ciconia*, a vagrant to Madeira, was observed at the airport on 12 July. The second **Black Stork** *C. nigra* for the island was found at Ponta do Sol on 10 October; the first was more than 150 years ago (per *Dutch Birding* 29: 242, 317 & 381). The first **Green-winged Teal** *Anas (crecca) carolinensis* for Madeira, a male, remained at Ribeira da Janela from 11 February until late November at least. The second **Greater Scaup** *Aythya marila* for the island, a first-winter/female, was at Lugar de Baixo on 24 November (per *Birding World* 20: 455).

A **Black Kite** *Milvus migrans* was seen at Ponta do Pargo on 29 June. Also there were a male and a female **Red-footed Falcon** *Falco vespertinus* (first found on 24 May) and a **Peregrine Falcon** *F. peregrinus* (from 16 March) (per *Birding World* 20: 278). A pale-morph **Booted Eagle** *Hieraaetus pennatus* was on the northern side of Madeira on 11 July (per *Dutch Birding* 29: 317). An adult summer **American Black Tern** *Chlidonias niger surinamensis* photographed at Funchal on 19 August was the first for Madeira (per *Dutch*

*Birding* 29: 326). The first **Yellow-browed Warbler** *Phylloscopus inornatus* for the island for 50 years was at Danta da Serra on 17 November (per *Birding World* 20: 455). On 29 June, an adult female **Woodchat Shrike** *Lanius senator* was seen at Ponta do Pargo (per *Birding World* 20: 278).

## Mali

On 7–8 March 2007, five **Seebohm's Wheatears** *Oenanthe oenanthe seebohmii* were observed or trapped in the vicinity of Nioro, near Mauritania's southern border; the only previous records are from the Tombouctou/Gossi area (MF).

## Mauritania

About 60 **Seebohm's Wheatears** *Oenanthe oenanthe seebohmii* were observed or trapped in the south of the country between 9 and 14 March 2007 (MF).

## Mauritius

Two adult and two immature **White-faced Whistling Ducks** *Dendrocygna viduata* were seen flying over Flic en Flac village in the Black River district on 13 September 2007 (JT). These birds were released from a local bird park and are frequently observed in the area; they are also breeding in the wild now and appear to have hybridised with **Fulvous Whistling Ducks** *D. bicolor* (VT). **White-faced Whistling Ducks** are not known to have been native on Mauritius. Birds were introduced (from Madagascar?) in the 19th century, and prospered until well into the 20th century, but were rare by 1952 and disappeared, perhaps due to hunting, soon after (RSa).

## Morocco

A **Little (Kurrichane) Buttonquail** *Turnix sylvaticus* was photographed at Oualidia on 16 September 2007 (per *Dutch Birding* 29: 383).

## Mozambique

A trip in June–July 2007 yielded the following records. **Grey-backed Sparrow Lark** *Eremopterix verticalis* and large numbers of **Lark-like Buntings** *Emberiza impetuanii* were observed in Parque Nacional do

Limpopo on 29 June; both these species are apparently new for Mozambique (they are not included in the country list at [www.africanbirdclub.org](http://www.africanbirdclub.org)). In woodland near Panda, a flock of 20+ **Mascarene Martins** *Phedina borbonica* was encountered on 30 June and the next day excellent views were obtained of most of the Miombo specials including **Olive-headed Weaver** *Ploceus olivaceiceps*; this area, north-west of the traditional sites, has good stands of pristine *Brachystegia* woodland and may hold a fair number of this species. Records at Rio Save Game Reserve included **Thick-billed Cuckoo** *Pachycoccyx audeberti* and **Lemon-breasted Canary** *Serinus citrinipectus* on 3 July (EM).

An adult **Brown Booby** *Sula leucogaster* was observed along the shore at Xai-Xai on 11 July 2007 (JW). At Rio Savanne, a **Greater Frigatebird** *Fregata minor* and a **Brown Noddy** *Anous stolidus* were located on 9 December (per TH). At least three **Garganey** *Anas querquedula* found at a small wetland south of Caia on 24 November were still there in early December (JG, EM).

## Namibia

Records from July–November 2007 include the following. A **European Honey Buzzard** *Pernis apivorus* was photographed at Daan Viljoen Game Reserve, near Windhoek, on 3 December (GS). An **American Golden Plover** *Pluvialis dominica* was reported from Swakopmund on 26 October (per TH) and photographed on 29 October and 1 November (MBo, ED). **Common Redshanks** *Tringa totanus* were seen at Swakopmund on 3 September (one: NT) and Walvis Bay on 14 November (two: PP). Also there were a **Red (Grey) Phalarope** *Phalaropus fulicarius* with 12 **Red-necked Phalaropes** *P. lobatus*, including one in breeding plumage (PP). A **Lesser Black-backed Gull** *Larus fuscus* was at the Okandeka Waterhole in Etosha National Park on 6 July (MCA); it was last reported on 25 July (per TH).



Black Stork / Cigogne noire  
*Ciconia nigra* (Pete Leonard)





Figure 8. European Turtle Dove / Tourterelle des bois *Streptopelia turtur*, Erongo Mountains, Namibia, 15 November 2007 (Phil Palmer)



Figures 9–10. Souza's Shrike / Pie-grèche de Souza *Lanius souzae*, Shamvura Lodge, Kavango Region, Namibia, 19 and 24 November 2007 (Mark Paxton)

A European Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur* photographed in the Erongo Mountains on 15 November (Fig. 8) was still present next day (PP); only two previous records have been published: one, undated, from the north of the country (*Birds of Africa* 1986) and another, from Etosha National Park, on 17 July 2002 (*Roberts Birds of Southern Africa* 2005). On 13 November, several Sclater's Larks *Spizocorys sclateri* were found c.130 km south-east of

Walvis Bay; this must be at the limit of their range. They were also present in the same area in November 2006 (PP). A Collared Flycatcher *Ficedula albicollis* was first reported from Shamvura Lodge, Kavango Region, on 29 September (per TH) and photographed on 8 October (HA). Also there, a pair of Souza's Shrikes *Lanius souzae* was photographed at its nest containing three small nestlings in November (MPx; Figs. 9–10).

### Niger

A Secretarybird *Sagittarius serpentarius* was seen near Tilia, north of Tahoua, in September 2006 (RH); this is the first record from Niger in decades. A single Banded Martin *Riparia cincta* was seen on 7 June 2004 just north of Magaria, south of Zinder (FPJ). A Lesser Swamp Warbler *Acrocephalus gracilirostris* in the same area, on 8 June 2004, constitutes the first record from Niger (FPJ); the species is considered common around Kano, Nigeria, 150 km to the south. The Wheatear Expedition to Niger, Mali and Mauritania in February–March 2007, from the Vogelwarte in Wilhelmshaven, reported a female Sardinian Warbler *Sylvia melanocephala* near Agadez and three Sennar Penduline Tits *Anthoscopus punctifrons* near Abalak (BM, IM, RN & MK); the paucity of records for these species in Niger is doubtless a reflection on the lack of observers (all per JB).



Secretarybird / Messenger serpenteaire *Sagittarius serpentarius* (Pete Leonard)

### Nigeria

A huge roost of Barn Swallows *Hirundo rustica*, possibly comprising

millions of birds, was reported for the first time from the vicinity of Butatong, near the headquarters of the Okwangwo Division of Cross River National Park, in late December 2007; according to a local farmer, the roost has been in use for over five years (II per LF).

Among the Subalpine Warblers *Sylvia cantillans* mist-netted in Dagona Bird Sanctuary, northern Nigeria, in February 2007, the great majority proved to be of the subspecies *moltoni* (sometimes proposed as a separate species, Moltoni's Warbler), with the rest being of the nominate race. Whereas the latter were very fat and not in moult, the former lacked any fat and were moulting their wing feathers. Adult *S. c. cantillans* and *S. c. albistriata* undergo a complete moult in their breeding quarters and the juveniles a partial one, whereas the moult of *moltoni* is very complex, with adults undergoing a complete moult either in their breeding or winter quarters, and the juveniles a complete moult in Africa (PM). Previously, nothing was known concerning the wintering range of *moltoni*.

A belated record from 2006 concerns a juvenile Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos* photographed c.10 km inshore from the Imo River estuary at Ikot Abasi, Akwa Ibom State, south-east Nigeria, on 22 October (Fig. 11); this apparently represents the first record for Nigeria (GH).



Figure 11. Pectoral Sandpiper / Bécasseau à poitrine cendrée *Calidris melanotos*, Ikot Abasi, Akwa Ibom State, south-east Nigeria, 22 October 2006 (Guus Hak)





Nubian Woodpecker / Pic de Nubie  
*Campethera nubica* (Pete Leonard)

### Rwanda

A male Nubian Woodpecker *Campethera nubica* was seen in Buhanga Forest, on the outskirts of Musanze (Ruhengeri), on 26 July 2007; this small forest has no formal protection, but local people maintain it as a sacred site (MPa). This would constitute the second record for the country, the first having been reported in November 1989 from Akagera National Park by Robert J. Dowsett and Françoise Dowsett-Lemaire (*in litt.* 2008). Previous records of the similar-looking Bennett's Woodpecker *C. bennettii* in Rwanda are presumed to be based on misidentifications (RJD).

### São Tomé & Príncipe

A White Stork *Ciconia ciconia* was photographed at Pinheira, São Tomé,



Figure 12. White Stork / Cicogne blanche *Ciconia ciconia*, Pinheira, São Tomé, 10 October 2007 (Elias d'Apresentação)

on 10 October 2007 (EA & MP per AG; Fig. 12); it was joined by a second individual on 18 October (AGa).

### Senegal

A Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes* was photographed at Djoudj National Park on 3 March 2007 (Fig. 13) and an adult Franklin's Gull *Larus pipixcan* at Saint Louis on 28 February (JP).

Impressive numbers of seabirds were counted from N'Gor on 5–28 October, including 112 Bulwer's Petrels *Bulweria bulwerii*, 4,433 Cape Verde Shearwaters *Calonectris (diomedea) edwardsii*, many Cape Verde / Cory's Shearwaters *C. d. edwardsii / borealis*, one Great Shearwater *Puffinus gravis*, 9,739 Sooty Shearwaters *P. griseus*, 91 Manx Shearwaters *P. puffinus*, two Little Shearwaters *P. assimilis boydi*, c.100 Wilson's *Oceanites oceanicus* and European Storm-petrels *Hydrobates pelagicus*, 916 Red (Grey) Phalaropes *Phalaropus fulicarius*, 4,982 Pomarine Skuas *Stercorarius pomarinus*, 2,879 Arctic Skuas *S. parasiticus*, 864 Long-tailed Skuas *S. longicaudus*, 762 'Great' Skuas *Catharacta* sp., 692 Audouin's Gulls *Larus audouinii*, 6,724 Sabine's Gulls *Xema sabini*, 147 Caspian Terns *Sterna caspia*, 659 Royal Terns *S. maxima*, 1,043 Lesser Crested Terns *S. bengalensis*, 11,075 Sandwich Terns *S. sandvicensis*, four Roseate Terns *S. dougallii*, 48,148 Common *S. hirundo* / Arctic Terns *S. paradisaea*, six Bridled Terns *S. anaethetus*,



Figure 13. Lesser Yellowlegs / Petit Chevalier *Tringa flavipes*, Djoudj National Park, Senegal, 3 March 2007 (Julien Piette)

two Sooty Terns *S. fuscata*, 204 Little Terns *S. albigrons* and 29,309 Black Terns *Chlidonias niger* (NH et al.).

### Seychelles

Reports received by Seychelles Bird Records Committee (SBRC) for May–November 2007 include the third Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris* for Seychelles (and the first for the outer islands), at Harrison's Beach and Gendron's Beach, Alphonse, on 1–3 November. A Buff-breasted Sandpiper *Tryngites subruficollis* at the airstrip, Alphonse, on 6–8 November was also a first report for the outer islands and the sixth for Seychelles. Two European Bee-eaters *Merops apiaster* at Picard, Aldabra, on 14 November represented the third report for Seychelles (both previous records were also from the Aldabra group). Isabelline Wheatears *Oenanthe isabellina* at the airstrip, Bird Island, on 27 October and at Providence, Mahé, on 6–7 November, were the fourth and fifth reports for Seychelles.

Common Sand Martins *Riparia riparia* were seen at the airstrip, Bird Island, on 27 October (two), at the south beach, St Francois Atoll, on 3 November (one) and at the airstrip, Alphonse, on 23–26 October (one); there are 15 previous records. White Wagtails *Motacilla alba* (23 previous records) were reported on Alphonse from 23 October to 3 November, D'Arros on 9 November and Picard, Aldabra, on 25 November.

Other sightings of interest include a Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* (33 previous records) on Alphonse from 16 October until 9 November, an adult Common Pratincole *Glareola pratincola* (six previous records) at La Passe, Silhouette, on 28 October, a Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata* (28 previous records, including 19 from Aldabra) at Picard, Aldabra, from 30 October to 3 November, and a Eurasian Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus* (ten previous records) on Cousine Island on 21 November (AS).

## Sierra Leone

Records from a visit in November–December 2007 include the following. A juvenile Long-tailed Hawk *Urotriorchis macrourus* was seen on Tiwai Island on 4 December. A Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo* was chasing cliff swallows near Bumbuna Dam on 12 December. A pair of Grey-throated Rails *Canirallus oculeus* was observed at Lalehun, Gola North, on 7 December. Ricefields near Kenema held four Great Snipe *Gallinago media* on 6 December. A male Yellow-throated Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx flavigularis* was seen at Kambui North on 10 December. A Pearl-spotted Owlet *Glaucidium perlatum* found in the Bumbuna area on 11 December is outside the range indicated in *Field Guide to the Birds of Western Africa* (Borrow & Demey 2004). In the forest near Lalehun, Gola North, an adult and a juvenile Olivaceous Flycatcher *Muscicapa olivascens* were seen on 8 December, whilst a Gola Malimbe *Malimbus ballmanni* was found nest building on 26 November.

A belated but noteworthy record is that of a Thick-billed Cuckoo *Pachycoccyx audeberti* seen in December 2004 north of Freetown (DH).



Pearl-spotted Owlet / Chevêchette perlée *Glaucidium perlatum* (Pete Leonard)

## Socotra

The cyclone spur that hit Socotra in early November 2007 produced sev-



Figure 14. Presumed Himalayan Swiftlet / Salangane de l'Himalaya *Collocalia brevirostris*, Diksam plateau, Socotra, 11 November 2007, with Little Swift / Martinet des maisons *Apus affinis* (on right of lower left picture), and Forbes-Watson's Swift / Martinet de Berlioz *A. berliozii* (top left) (Werner Suter)

eral interesting records. New for Socotra were Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo* (15 together over Hadibu on 3rd), Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus* (one, freshly dead on 2nd; one on 3rd), Alpine Swift *Tachymarptis melba* (two near Hadibu on 5th) and Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* (one on 6th; first for Yemen). Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters *Merops persicus* started to arrive en masse on 3rd, with numbers reaching c.2,000 on 6th (RP).

In a group of swifts comprising Little *Apus affinis* and Forbes-Watson's Swifts *A. berliozii* flying over the Diksam plateau on 10–11 November, up to six small grey-brown swifts with a fluttering flight, a square, slightly notched tail and a pale grey rump band were noticed. These birds, which were photographed (Fig. 14), were tentatively identified as Himalayan Swiftlets *Collocalia brevirostris*, a new species and genus for Africa and the Middle East (HB et al.).

## South Africa

The following records are from May–December 2007. On pelagic trips out of Cape Town the following species were recorded. Single Wandering Albatrosses *Diomedea exulans* were seen on 15 and 22 September (DG), and single Northern Royal Albatrosses *D. (epomophora) sanfordi* on 21 July (TH; Fig. 15) and 2 and 8 September (JG, CD & AG). A Southern (Antarctic) Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialisoides* was observed on 8 September (JG, CD & AG). In September, up to 5,000 Pintado Petrels *Daption capense* were found (JG & DG). A Great-winged Petrel *Pterodroma macroptera* was seen on 2 September (JG), whilst Soft-plumaged Petrels *P. mollis* were observed on 2 September (eight: CD & AG), 15 September (two: DG) and 22 September (one: DG). A Slender-billed Prion *Pachyptila belcheri* was reported on 23 June (TH; Fig. 16) (with a possible sighting on a pelagic out of Richards Bay, KwaZulu-Natal,





**Figure 15.** Northern Royal Albatross / Albatros royal du Nord *Diomedea (epomophora) sanfordi*, off Cape Town, South Africa, 21 July 2007 (Trevor Hardaker)



**Figure 16.** Slender-billed Prion / Prion de Belcher *Pachyptila belcheri*, off Cape Town, South Africa, 23 June 2007 (Trevor Hardaker)



**Figure 17.** Wilson's Phalarope / Phalarope de Wilson *Phalaropus tricolor*, Dolphin Beach pans, Cape Town, South Africa, 20–23 May 2007 (Trevor Hardaker)

on 19 August; *TH*). **Spectacled Petrels** *Procellaria (aequinoctialis) conspicillata* were seen on 17 September (one: *BRo*) and 13 October (two: *VW*). The first **Cory's Shearwater** *Calonectris diomedea* of the season was seen on 13 October (*VW*) and a few early **Great Shearwaters** *Puffinus gravis* on 2 September (*JG*). A **Little Shearwater** *P. assimilis* was found c.60 nautical miles south of Mossel Bay on 3 June (*MG*). Southern Africa's sixth **White-faced Storm-petrel** *Pelagodroma marina* was observed on 11 May (*MG*), with another on a pelagic out of Richards Bay, KwaZulu-Natal, on 23 June (per *TH*). An early **Arctic Skua** *Stercorarius parasiticus* was seen on 17 September (*BRo*) and two very early **Sabine's Gulls** *Xema sabini* in summer plumage on 8 September (*JG*).

A **Northern Royal Albatross** was seen off Cape Point on 12 May and a **Grey-headed Albatross** *Thalassarche chrysostoma* at Dyer Island, Western Cape, on 16 May (*CF*). On 4 October, a **King Penguin** *Aptenodytes patagonicus* came ashore at Milnerton Beach, Western Cape, and, although in pristine condition, was picked up by a member of the public and taken into care; this was the second record of this extreme vagrant on the South African shoreline in 2007 (per *TH*). A **Red-tailed Tropicbird** *Phaethon*

*rubricauda* was at St Francis Bay, Eastern Cape, on 3 May and another flew over Wemmershoek Dam, near Paarl, Western Cape, in early December (per *TH*). The long-staying **Little Blue Heron** *Egretta caerulea* was still present at Papendorp on the Olifants River, Western Cape, in November; the bird has been there since November 2001 (per *TH*). A **European Honey Buzzard** *Pernis apivorus* was photographed in a garden in Sandton, Gauteng, on 13 November (*MBr*). In Kruger National Park, a **Striped Crake** *Aenigmatolimnas marginalis* was found along the Levhuvu River, near Pafuri, on 17 December (*GL*).

A **Crab-plover** *Dromas ardeola* was in the sanctuary area at Richards Bay,



European Honey Buzzard / Bondrée apivore *Pernis apivorus* (Pete Leonard)

KwaZulu-Natal, on 8 December (per *TH*). A **Common Redshank** *Tringa totanus* was still at Geelbek, West Coast National Park, Western Cape, on 10 June (*DN*) and 21 July (*HdK*). Two were seen at this site on 24 and 28 October (*BV*, *MT*) and one on 11 November (*EV*), whilst another was reported from Strandfontein sewage works, Western Cape, on 29 October (*CD*). In Limpopo Province, single **Green Sandpipers** *Tringa ochropus* were observed at Polokwane Game Reserve on 23 November (*CDi*) and at Mopane Bush Lodge, Mapesu Naature Reserve, on 4 December (*PP*). A **Terek Sandpiper** *Xenus cinereus* was found at Strandfontein on 14 October (*JM*). **Wilson's Phalaropes** *Phalaropus tricolor* were found at Barberspan Nature Reserve, North-West Province, on 1 May (a first-year: *FP* & *RV*) and at the Dolphin Beach pans in Table view, west of Cape Town, on 20–23 May (a female in full breeding plumage: *DD*, *TH*; Fig. 17). Up to three **Red-necked Phalaropes** *P. lobatus* were reported at Velddrif, Western Cape, in early December (per *TH*).

Records of **Franklin's Gulls** *Larus pipixcan* included one in full breeding plumage at Cape of Good Hope Nature Reserve, Western Cape, on 6 May (*IS*); one, perhaps the same individual, at Seal's Point, False Bay,

Western Cape, on 18 May (CF); one at King's Beach, Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape, on 28 May (PW); one at Warner Beach near Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, on 19 June (DC & BS); and one at Jacobsbaai, north of Saldanha Bay, Western Cape, on 4–15 August (per TH). During the midwinter count at Botrivierlei, Western Cape, on 14 July a **Common Black-headed Gull** *Larus ridibundus* was seen (MD). The **Bridled Tern** *Sterna anaethetus* at Cape Recife, Eastern Cape, was still present on 11 May (AT) and remained until 24 June (per TH). There was a group of six **Sooty Terns** *S. fuscata* on a pelagic from Richards Bay, KwaZulu-Natal, on 22 July (per TH).

A **Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea* was discovered near Mission Beach, at St Lucia, KwaZulu-Natal, on 29 May (Cfo). A female **Collared Flycatcher** *Ficedula albicollis* first reported at Augrabies Falls National Park, Northern Cape, on 30 April, was photographed the next day (PC).



Figure 18. White Stork / Cicogne blanche *Ciconia ciconia*, Sisters Walk, St Helena, 2 October 2007 (Morgan Constantine)

#### St Helena

A **White Stork** *Ciconia ciconia* was photographed at Sisters Walk, on 2 October 2007 (Fig. 18); this species is a very rare accidental visitor to the island (CTMC per BRo).

#### Sudan

During a stay in southern Sudan in November–December 2007, some 50 bird species were opportunistically recorded, all of which are known



Eastern Grey Plantain-eater / Touraco à queue barrée *Crinifer zonurus* (Pete Leonard)

from the areas visited (cf. Nikolaus 1987. *Distribution Atlas of Sudan's Birds*). However, the record of three **Eastern Grey Plantain-eaters** *Crinifer zonurus*, observed in the Kurchi area, southern Kordofan, may present some interest, as the species is marked as a 'probable wanderer' to this area in the *Atlas* (OB).

#### Tanzania

There were several reports of **European Bee-eaters** *Merops apiaster* in early September, with the first from Ruaha National Park (07°30'S) on 6th, over Singida (04°45'S) on 9th, over Arusha (04°25'S) on 10th

and south-east of Bahi Swamp (06°15'S) on 11th; this is some 3–4 weeks earlier than usual (NB).

#### Tunisia

Records from October 2007 include the following. **White-headed Ducks** *Oxyura leucocephala* were reported from Sidi Jdidi Reservoir, Nabeul, on 7th (81) and Barrage El Haouareb, Kairouan, on 10th (three). Single **Black-shouldered Kites** *Elanus caeruleus* were observed 65 km north-west of Sousse on 9th and 15 km south-west of Kairouan on 10th. Two adult **Purple Swamphens** *Porphyrio porphyrio* were at Sidi Jdidi Reservoir on 7th (DR & GPS). A first-winter **Red-breasted Flycatcher** *Ficedula parva* was discovered at Barrage El Haouareb on 10th (AB & DR).

#### Uganda

In July–September 2007 the following were reported. A **Booted Eagle** *Hieraaetus pennatus* near Kampala on 11 September is an early date (DP). Around 2 September, a **Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres* was discovered in Queen Elizabeth National Park and a **Thick-billed Cuckoo** *Pachycoccyx audeberti* in Lake Mburo National Park (HBy per DP). **Southern Carmine Bee-eaters** *Merops nubicoides* were photographed in



Figure 19. Southern Carmine / Guêpier carmine *Merops nubicoides* (left) and Northern Carmine Bee-eater / Guêpier écarlate *M. nubicus*, Murchison Falls National Park, Uganda, 27 July 2007 (Peter Dedicoat)



Murchison Falls National Park on 27 July (Fig. 19); according to *The Bird Atlas of Uganda* (Carswell *et al.* 2005) the only previous record is of a bird presumed to be this species in Lake Mburo National Park, in the south of the country (PD).

A pair of **African Green**

**Broadbills** *Pseudocalyptomena graueri* was seen at their nest near Mubwindi Swamp, Ruhija, Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, on 20 July (PD).

**Capuchin Babbler** *Phyllanthus atripennis* (two families) and **Blue-billed Malimbe** *Malimbus nitens* were observed in Semliki National Park in September (HBy); the main range of these species lies west of Uganda and few records exist for the country.

## Zimbabwe

During a short and trouble-free visit on 12–14 July 2007, the Vumba and Seldomseen area provided views of most of the specialities, including **Swynnerton's Robin** *Swynnertonia synnertoni*, **Roberts's Warbler** *Oreophilais robertsi* and **Chirinda** *Apalis Apalis chirindensis*. Places like Seldomseen, which has excellent local guides, may well be at risk of disappearing if not visited by foreign birders (EM).

Records were collated by Ron Demey from contributions supplied by Henk Alting (HA), Elias d'Apresentação (EA), Roy Armstrong (RA), Christian Artuso (CA), Neil Baker (NB), Clive

Barlow (CB), Mark Bing (MB), Sering Bojang (SB), Mark Boorman (MBo), Nik Borrow / Birdquest (NBo), Ole Brauer (OB), Chris Brewster (CBr), Mike Bridgeford (MBr), Andreas Britz (AB), Joost Brouwer (JB), Hugh Buck (HB), Herbert Byaruhanga (HBy), Morné Carstens (MCA), Darrel Clifford (DC), Philip Coetzee (PC), Chris, Trudi & Morgan Constantine (CTMC), Mike Crewe (MC), Peter Dedicoat / Avian Adventures (PD), Dave Deighton (DD), Mariana Delport (MD), Eckart Demasius (ED), Chris Dickens (CDi), Kabo Ditshane (KD), Cliff Dorse (CD), Robert J. Dowsett (RJD), Josh Engel / Tropical Birding (JE), Chris Fallows (CF), Lincoln Fishpool (LF), Marc Förschler (MF), Caroline Fox (CFo), Paul Freeman (PF), Angus Gascoigne (AGa), Dalton Gibbs (DG), Mike Goldsworthy (MG), Meidad Goren (MG), John Graham (JG), Anne Gray (AG), Guus Hak (GH), Roland Hammel (RH), Trevor Hardaker (TH), Andrew Hester (AH), Harold Hester (HH), John High (JH), David Hoddinot / Rockjumper Birding Tours (DH), Katie Hoff (KH), Niklas Holström (NH), John Hughes (JHu), Imong Inaoyom (II), Colin Jackson (CJ), Flemming Pagh Jensen (FPJ), Moussa Kailou (MK), Hannelie de Klerk (HdK), Geoff Lockwood (GL), James Lowther (JL), Ivan Maggini (IM), John Magner (JM), Etienne Marais (EM), Benjamin Metzger (BM), Pierfrancesco Micheloni (PM),

Keddy Mooketsa (KM), Mark Muller (MM), Wim Mullié (WM), Roland Neumann (RN), Doug Newman (DN), Phil Palmer / Bird Holidays UK (PP), Michael Patten (MPa), Mark Paxton (MPx), Faansie Peacock (FP), Julien Piette (JP), Martinho Pires (MP), Derek Ponieroy (DP), Richard Porter (RP), Hugo Rainey (HR), Richard Randall (RR), Detlef Robel (DR), Brian Rode (BR), Barrie Rose (BRo), Beau Rowlands (BRo), Kev Roy (KR), Roger Safford (RSa), Lamin Sanyang (LS), Gerd-Peter Schulze (GPS), Graham Searll (GS), Robert Self (RS), David Shackelford / Rockjumper Birding Tours (DS), Ian Sinclair (IS), Adrian Skerrett (AS), Barry Swaddle (BS), Vikash Tatayah (VT), Alf Taylor (AT), Neil Thomson (NT), Mel Tripp (MT), Steph Tyler (ST), Mark Vanderwalle (MV), Brian Vanderwalt (BV), Ronel Viljoen (RV), Ernie Visagie (EV), Nigel Voaden (NV), Jaap van der Waarde (JvdW), Vince Ward (VW), Johnny Wilson (JW), Phil Whittington (PW), Edwin Winkel (EW) and from Africa—Birds & Birding, Birding World, Dutch Birding, Sandgrouse, capebirdnet, SARareBirdAlert, senegal.seawatching.net and www.zestforbirds.co.za.

Contributions for Recent Reports can be sent to Ron Demey, Van der Heimstraat 52, 2582 SB Den Haag, Netherlands and also by e-mail: rondemey@cs.com

# Reviews



## Pipits of Southern Africa

Faansie Peacock, 2006. Pretoria: privately published by the author; [www.pipits.co.za](http://www.pipits.co.za). 296 pp, seven colour plates, 32 maps, many line drawings and diagrams. Softback. ISBN 0-620-35967-6. UK£-21.95.

At nearly 300 pages this work is considerably thicker than might be expected for a book that covers a 'mere' 16 species. An initial flick through its pages reveals a vast patchwork of line drawings, diagrams, tables, maps, keys, plates and text, suggesting that *Pipits of Southern Africa* is not so much an identification guide, but an encyclopedia of information about its subjects and, as such, not quite like any bird book I had encountered before. The first of two contents pages is on p. 13, but to reach it, the reader must navigate a quick reference index replete with thumbnail paintings, the title page, a frontispiece, a dedication, a poem, a plug for the accompanying website, and a dictionary definition of 'pipit'. Following the second, more detailed, contents page is a section entitled 'How to use this book', which is 19 pages long and includes, for example, at least four different glossaries. It is, quite simply, brimming with information, sometimes near-overwhelmingly so.

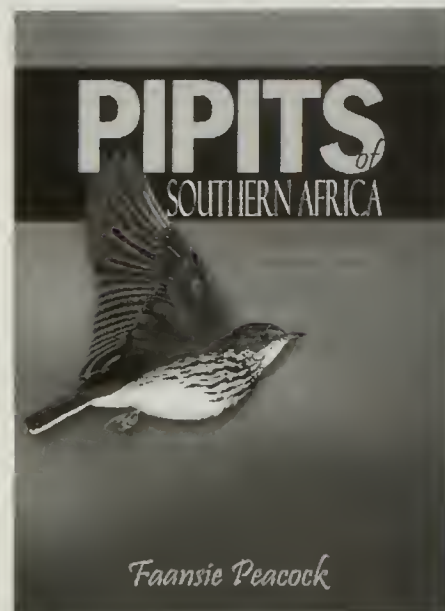
The bulk of the book comprises four chapters: 'Introduction to the Pipits', 'Pipit Identification', 'Field Guide' and 'Species Accounts'. The first offers an overview of the family Motacillidae, with sections on each of the six genera. One might easily argue that a page and a half of information concerning the exclusively Asian Forest Wagtail *Dendronanthus indicus* is unnecessary in a book about just one subgroup of the genus *Anthus*, but I found the text absorbing nonetheless. There is also a gen-

eral discussion of vocalisations, breeding biology and pipit systematics. I find the author's attitude to taxonomy pragmatic and refreshing. There is no attempt to forge a definitive classification, but Peacock outlines the various current opinions as well as highlighting the great need for further research.

The chapter treating 'Pipit Identification' commences by explaining how to separate pipits from virtually any other passerine that might conceivably cause confusion. The text moves on to examine all the features and factors that need to be taken into account when starting to identify pipits to species.

The Field Guide chapter is perhaps the most conventional in this rather unconventional tome, with colour plates of each species appearing opposite concise text and maps. The plates (and indeed all the illustrations) are by the author, in general well executed, and are very thoroughly labelled. I feel that many show excessive contrast in tone, though how much this might be a result of printing vagaries is unclear. Furthermore, I was surprised that in a work of such depth, many species are still only represented by one or two figures. I had expected at least one plate per species and it would have been very useful to include some photographs as well, even if many pictures can be found on the author's website.

The species accounts represent the 'meat' of the work, constituting almost exactly 50% of the book's whole. Most species are covered in eight or nine pages (range 7–14), and each account covers synonyms, field identification, structure, description, bare parts, behaviour, vocalisations and displays, distribution, habitat, status and movements, and geographical variation. My initial worry that these would prove to



be long, dry, marathons of reference material was soon forgotten, and I was swiftly lulled by the author's readable prose. Nonetheless, I was surprised to find nothing concerning breeding and only a small amount of dietary information, despite the book's generally exhaustive nature, but this perhaps highlights its ultimate aim, namely identification.

In addition to all of the above, scattered throughout are separate boxes of information covering a very wide selection of topics. These include tips on how to see certain elusive species, evolution, taxonomic debates, bird flocks, jizz, tail-wagging, and even how the author painted the colour plates. This format is increasingly common and seems to be one that has evolved in parallel with the internet. Books such as this are more web-like than linear, and one cannot help feeling that the entire project will eventually become web-based as sound-recordings and videos become a crucial part of our approach to identification and overall improved knowledge of birds.

For now though, this book represents a wonderful step in a new



direction for African birding. It exudes much spirit, character and passion, and hopefully these attributes will assist the author to succeed in one of his main goals, to enthuse people about pipits.

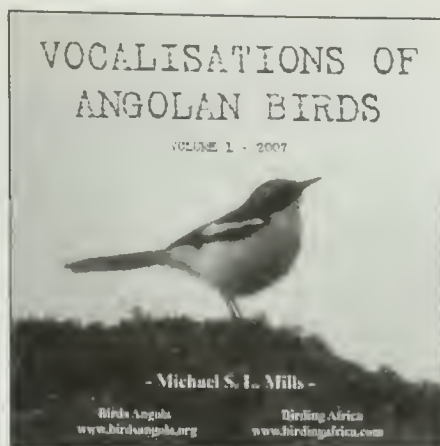
Many years ago, I was repeatedly advised that 'everything [should be] in moderation', but advances are rarely made by moderate people, and we must hope that Faansie Peacock sustains his obsession, develops it further and expands his horizons to the entire continent. Afrotropical pipits have long needed a champion and in Peacock they appear to have found one.

Pete Leonard

### Vocalisations of Angolan Birds. Vol. 1

Michael S. L. Mills. 2007. 1 CD in MP3 format (111 species). Cape Town: Birds Angola & Birding Africa. Available from WildSounds. UK£11.99.

After having been off-limits for about three decades due to the civil war, Angola finally opened up to birders again a few years ago. Unsurprisingly, no commercially available sound-recordings dedicated to the birds of Angola, to help the visiting birder find the country's endemics and near-endemics, were available. With the present collection, Michael Mills has now largely filled that gap. He has spent several months in the field in Angola and made extensive recordings of bird vocalisations. This CD presents a selection of 111 species, including many Angolan specialties, such as Grey-striped *Francolinus griseostriatus* and Swierstra's Francolins *F. swierstrai*, Red-crested Tauraco *Tauraco erythrophus*, Angola Cave Chat *Xenocopsychus ansorgei*, Gabela Akalat *Sheppardia gabela*, White-headed Robin Chat *Cossypha heinrichi*, Pulitzer's Longbill *Macrosphenus pulitzeri*, Angola Slaty Flycatcher *Melaenornis brunneus*, White-fronted Wattle-eye *Platysteira albifrons*, Monteiro's Bush-shrike *Malaconotus monteiri*, Gabela Bush-shrike *Laniarius amboimensis* and Gabela Helmetshrike *Prionops gabela*.



Most of these species had not previously been sound-recorded.

The recordings, which are generally of good quality, vary in length from very short (e.g. 7 seconds for Red-capped Crombec *Sylvietta ruficapilla*) to reasonably long. Appropriately, most tracks of specialties are more than one minute in length, with some, e.g. White-headed Robin Chat and Monteiro's Bush-shrike, even occupying more than two minutes. Individual species are unannounced but are given a specific track number; however, the space between the different tracks is usually so short (the silence between different recordings of the same species is often longer) that one always has to remain vigilant as to the track currently playing.

Regrettably, there is no accompanying booklet with useful recording details, such as date, locality, length of the recording and background sounds: only a species list (without scientific names) and track numbers. Although the lack of such information on collections of sound-recordings is always to be deplored, this is particularly so in the present case, as the CD contains a few intriguing tracks that beg explanation. For example, three tracks are marked as being of 'swift species' (14–16) and another of a 'hylota species' (73). It would be interesting to know the recordist's comments on these. Several species appearing, sometimes quite clearly, in the background lack their own separate track—it would therefore be useful to identify them. An easy and economical way of pro-

viding all the above-mentioned details would be to place them on the website of 'Birds Angola', one of the publishers, at [www.birdsangola.org](http://www.birdsangola.org), where much information on the country's birds can be found.

One final remark: this CD is in MP3 format; to be played on a CD player or a computer, a recent model or appropriate software is needed.

Michael Mills is to be congratulated with this fine collection of bird sounds, which is warmly recommended to all those who plan to visit Angola, or are interested in vocalisations of African birds. This CD is presented as 'Volume 1'—we thus eagerly await the next volume of recordings from this interesting and ornithologically under-explored country.

Ron Demey

### The Lapwing

Michael Shrubbs, 2007. London, UK: T. & A. D. Poyser. 240 pp, line drawings by Robert Gillmor, colour photographs, many maps, graphs and tables. Hardback. ISBN 978 07136 6854 4. UK£40.00

This book, the latest in the Poyser monograph series, covers the biology of the Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*. It primarily concerns the breeding season in northern Europe, of which the book provides a comprehensive review. The species occurs in Africa, mainly only in winter along the north coast, although it does breed rarely in Morocco and winters occasionally south to Mauritania, Senegal and the Cape Verdes.

Peter Lack



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## Guidelines for Contributors

The *Bulletin of the African Bird Club* welcomes original contributions on all aspects of the birds of Africa. Africa is here defined as the area covered by Collar, N. J. & Stuart, S. N. 1985. *Threatened Birds of Africa and Related Islands: The ICBP/IUCN Red Data Book*. Cambridge, UK: International Council for Bird Preservation, namely continental Africa, Indian Ocean islands west of 80°E, e.g. Madagascar, the Mascarene Islands and Socotra; Atlantic Ocean islands on or east of the mid-Atlantic ridge, e.g. the Tristan da Cunha group, the Azores and the Canaries (for a map, see *Bull. ABC* 12: 2). Photographs and drawings are welcomed.

Contributions will be accepted subject to editing and refereeing by independent reviewers, where appropriate. The Editorial Team will be happy to advise authors on the acceptability of material at draft stage if desired.

### Submissions

Contributions should be submitted by e-mail (preferred) or on CD (large files containing high-quality photographs or figures) to the editor's address on the inside front cover. Exceptionally, contributions submitted exclusively as hard (printed) copies can be accepted if the author is unable to provide electronic files. Such manuscripts should be supplied in two copies and be double-spaced, on one side of the paper only, with wide margins all round. Photographs and graphics should be supplied elec-

tronically as high-resolution jpegs or tiffs (preferably >300dpi and not heavily compressed). Original images are preferred to those that have been cropped or digitally manipulated and files should be sent separately, not embedded in other documents. Photographs supplied as prints or colour slides can be accepted. All submissions are acknowledged.

Contributions are accepted in English or French. For major papers, a summary briefly presenting the key results and conclusions should be included. In addition, French summaries are required for all contributions published in English, and vice versa. If authors cannot provide a summary in the other language themselves, they should supply one for translation. Authors are encouraged to submit their work to other ornithologists for critical assessment and comment prior to submission. All help received should be acknowledged.

If a contribution is submitted on CD, computer (e.g. IBM compatible PC, Macintosh) and word-processing package (e.g. Word, WordPerfect) used should be stated.

When sending their contribution on disk, authors should not key anything in ALL CAPS (i.e. with the CAPS LOCK key depressed) unless the combination always occurs in that form (e.g. 'USA'). The carriage return key should not be used at the end of lines, and the margins should not be justified right. When formatting tables one tab, and not spaces, should be used between each col-

umn. Unless a sketch map is provided as part of the article the names of places should follow those on standard or readily available maps (preferably a recent edition of *The Times Atlas of the World*).

### Preferred bird names

The African Bird Club has published a checklist of birds in its region ([www.africanbirdclub.org/resources/checklist.html](http://www.africanbirdclub.org/resources/checklist.html)) based on *Bird of Africa* Vols. 1–7, but incorporating recent revisions where appropriate. It includes preferred scientific, English and French names as well as races and alternatives used by publications widely used in Africa. This list should be followed or at least the preferred name used there should be given as an alternative. For non-*Birds of Africa* species (e.g. from the Malagasy region) Dowsett & Forbes-Watson (1993) should be used or, for species outside the ABC region, Dickinson (2003) *The Howard and Moore Complete Checklist of the Birds of the World*. Deviation from such works should be noted and the reasons given.

### Style

Authors are requested to follow the conventions used in the *Bulletin of the African Bird Club* and to refer to a recent issue for guidance. A detailed style guide can be obtained, either electronically or as a hard copy, on request from the Managing Editor.

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## ABC Representatives

Ascension Island: John Hughes, The Old Shop, High Street, Shipton Bellinger, Hampshire SP9 7UE, UK. E-mail: john@rasuk.org.

Angola: Pedro de França Doria vaz Pinto, Rua Hélder Neto 12, 7<sup>a</sup>A; Luanda. E-mail: pypinto@clix.pt.

Australia: K. David Bishop, PO Box 1234, Armidale, NSW 2350. E-mail: kdbishop@ozemail.com.au.

Austria: Graham Tebb, Graf Starhembergsgasse 20/14, 1040 Vienna. E-mail: tebb@fwf.ac.at.

Belgium: Jan Goossens, Vruntebaan 18, 2520 Emblem. Tel/fax: +32 3 488 13 71. E-mail: jan.goossens5@pandora.be.

Botswana: Chris Brewster, PO Box 26292, Gaborone. E-mail: cbrewster@botsnet.bw.

Canada: Antonio Salvadori, 17 Colborn Street, Guelph, Ontario. N1G 2M4. E-mail: rosella@snowwhite.cis.uoguelph.ca.

Canary Islands/Spain: Tony Clarke, República Dominicana No. 61, Barrio de Fátima, 38500 Güímar, Tenerife. E-mail: bluechaffinch@btopenworld.com.

Central African Republic: Nigel Voaden, 18 Fair Hill, Shipham, Winscombe, Somerset BS25 1TH, UK. E-mail: nigel.voaden@talk21.com.

Denmark: Uffe Gjøl Sørensen, Øvangeden Oven Vandet 68,2, 1415 Copenhagen. E-mail: ugs@post7.tele.dk.

Democratic Republic of Congo: Byamana Rohert Kizungu, Head of Ornithology Laboratory, CRSN-Lwiro, DRC, BP02 Cyanguu, Rwanda. E-mail: kbyamana@yahoo.com.

Egypt: Sherif & Mindy Baha El Din, 2 Abdalla El Katib St. Apt. 3, Dokki, Cairo. Tel/Fax: 3608160. E-mail: egyptcalling@yahoo.com.

Eritrea: Russom Teklay, c/o Andeberhan Teklay, PFDJ, zone: Maekel, sub-zone: south east, PO Box 4618, Asmara. E-mail: russotek79@yahoo.com.

France: Bob & Françoise Dowsett, Le Pouget, Sumène, F30440. E-mail: Dowsett@aol.com.

Finland: Annika Forsten, Tornvalksv. 2 bst 15, 02620 Esho. E-mail: annika.forsten@alula.fi.

The Gambia: Solomon Jallow, c/o WABSA, Department of Parks & Wildlife, Management HQ, Abuko Nature Reserve, Abuko, PMB 676 S/K. E-mail: hahitatafrica@hotmail.com.

Ghana: Samuel Kofi Nyame, PO Box KIA 30284, Airport, Accra. E-mail: samknyame02@yahoo.com.

Italy: Giuseppe Micali, Via Volterra 3, Milano, MI 1-20146. E-mail: xeyam@tin.it.

Kenya: Simon Nganda Musila, Department of Ornithology, National Museums of Kenya, PO Box 40658, GPO 00100, Nairobi. Email: surnbirds@yahoo.com.

Liberia: Moses A. Massah, Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia, Monrovia Zoo, PO Box 2628, Monrovia. E-mail: mosesmassah@yahoo.com.

Madagascar: Julien Ramanampamonjy, Section Oiseaux, PBZT, BP 4096, 101 Antananarivo. E-mail: julien\_asy@mel.wanadoo.mg (mark FAO: Julien Ramanampamonjy).

Malawi: Lawrence Luhanga, Malawi Ornithological Society, c/o Dept. of Ornithology, Museums of Malawi, PO Box 30360, Chichiri, Blantyre 3. E-mail: malawibirds@yahoo.com.

Namibia: Tim Osborne, PO Box 22, Okaukuejo, vis Outjo 9000. E-mail: kori@iway.na.

Netherlands: Ron Demey, Van der Heimstraat 52, 2582 SB Den Haag, Netherlands. E-mail: rondemey@compuserve.com.

Nigeria: Vincent Chikwendu Ejere, Dept. of Zoology, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. E-mail: misunn@aol.com.

São Tomé & Príncipe: Angus Gascoigne, CP 289, São Tomé. E-mail: agascoigne@eits.st.

Seychelles: Adrian Skerrett, Shipping House, PO Box 336, Victoria, Mahé. Fax: 380538. E-mail: maheship@seychelles.net or adrian@skerrett.fsnet.co.uk

Sierra Leone: Kenneth Gbengba, Conservation Society of Sierra Leone, 2 Pyke Street, PO Box 1292, Freetown, Sierra Leone. E-mail: factsfinding@yahoo.com.

South Africa: Steven Evans, PO Box 1994, Cresta 2118. E-mail: stevene@ewt.org.za.

Swaziland: Dr Ara Monadjem, UNISWA, P/Bag 4, Kwaluseni. E-mail: ara@uniswacc.uniswa.sz.

Tanzania: Maurus Msuha, Tanzania Wildlife Research Institute, PO Box 661, Arusha. E-mail: carnivores@habari.co.tz.

Tunisia: Hichem Azafzaf, 11 rue Abou el alla el maari, Cité el houda, 2080 Ariana. E-mail: azafzaf@gnet.tn

Uganda: Prof. Derek Pomeroy, Makerere University Institute of the Environment and Natural Resources, PO Box 7298, Kampala. E-mail: derek@imul.com.

USA: Jon King, EDAW Inc., 2022 J Street, Sacramento, CA 95811. E-mail: jon.king@edaw.com

Zimbabwe: The Executive Officer, BirdLife Zimbabwe, PO Box RVL100, Runiville, Harare. E-mail: birds@zol.co.zw.

The ABC Representatives scheme aims to support existing members by providing a local point of contact in their region, for example, to answer queries to the Club, to solicit submissions for the bulletin, and possibly to arrange local meetings for members. Existing ABC members can contact their local Representative in the first instance with queries relating to the Club. ABC Representatives help to recruit new members in their region, for example, by distributing posters and arranging local advertising. In Africa, ABC Representatives help to identify opportunities to invest the ABC Conservation Fund and candidates for the Supported Membership scheme.

The Club aims to appoint many further ABC Representatives. If you are interested in supporting and promoting the Club in your region, have any queries, or require further information relating to the ABC Representatives scheme please do not hesitate to contact the Membership Secretary at the Club address, e-mail membership@africanbirdclub.org.

ABC is seeking Country Representatives in the following countries, principally within the Club's region: Algeria, Azores, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde Islands, Chad, Comoros & Mayotte, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea Conakry, Libya, Madeira, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Réunion, Rodriguez, Rwanda, Senegal, Socotra, Somalia, St Helena, Sudan, Togo, Tristan da Cunha and USA.

## Supported and Affiliated Membership

The Supporting Members scheme is a key part of the Club's strategy of encouraging the spread of knowledge and understanding of birds as widely as possible throughout Africa. The scheme enables Africans who would not otherwise have the resources to join, to become members of the Club. The scheme is funded by Supporting Members who pay a minimum of UK£30 to cover their own membership and the subscription of at least one African member. The money they contribute over and above their own subscription is placed in a special fund that is used to cover the membership expenses of African members whom they may have nominated, or who have been nominated by other Club members.

Although we have suggested a minimum of UK£30 to become a Supporting Member, any contribution is welcome. All members of the Club, even if they do not feel able to become Supporting Members themselves, are invited to nominate candidates for supported memberships. Candidates should be nationals of an African country, with a genuine interest in wild birds but without the resources to become members in their own right. Africans who think they

may qualify are very welcome to put their own names forward, supported by a letter of recommendation from someone such as their employer, teacher or an officeholder in a local wildlife organisation.

The scheme now also includes clubs who wish to be affiliated with the African Bird Club in African countries where it is difficult for local individuals to become members in their own right. Clubs accepted for membership under the scheme receive up to six copies of each issue of the bulletin for circulation among their members. Instead of paying a membership fee, Clubs are asked to provide a short annual report on their activities that may be published in the bulletin. Clubs interested in becoming Affiliated Member Clubs are invited to apply to the ABC Secretary giving details of their membership, their constitution or a statement of their objectives and conditions of their membership, and their activities to date.

## ABC Information Service

ABC offers a service to help members with information requests. Perhaps you are planning a trip to Africa and need local advice, or maybe you are in search of an obscure fact about an African species. The Club does not guarantee to

find all the answers but will try to help. The service is free to ABC members. Contact: Keith Betton, who is also custodian of ABC's journal library, at 8 Dukes Close, Folly Hill, Farnham, Surrey, GU9 0DR, UK. Tel: +44 1252 724068. E-mail: info@africanbirdclub.org.

## AfricanBirding e-mail discussion list

Launched, in October 2000, by the ABC and the Pan-African Ornithological Congress, AfricanBirding or AB, as it is known, has become a useful forum for those interested in African birds. To join the discussion, which averages 1–2 messages a day, send a blank e-mail to AfricanBirding-subscribe@yahoo.com. You will then receive an e-mail instructing you how to join.

The Club also maintains a list of members' e-mail addresses. This list is confidential and used only for Club purposes, e.g. for informing members of upcoming events and news concerning the Club. It is not divulged to anybody outside the Club or used for commercial advertising. At present it includes addresses for about 50% of the membership. Please send any additions or amendments to the membership secretary: membership@africanbirdclub.org.



Dwarf Olive Ibis / Ibis de Bocage *Bostrychia (olivacea) bocagei* (Nik Borrow/Rare Birds Yearbook 2008)